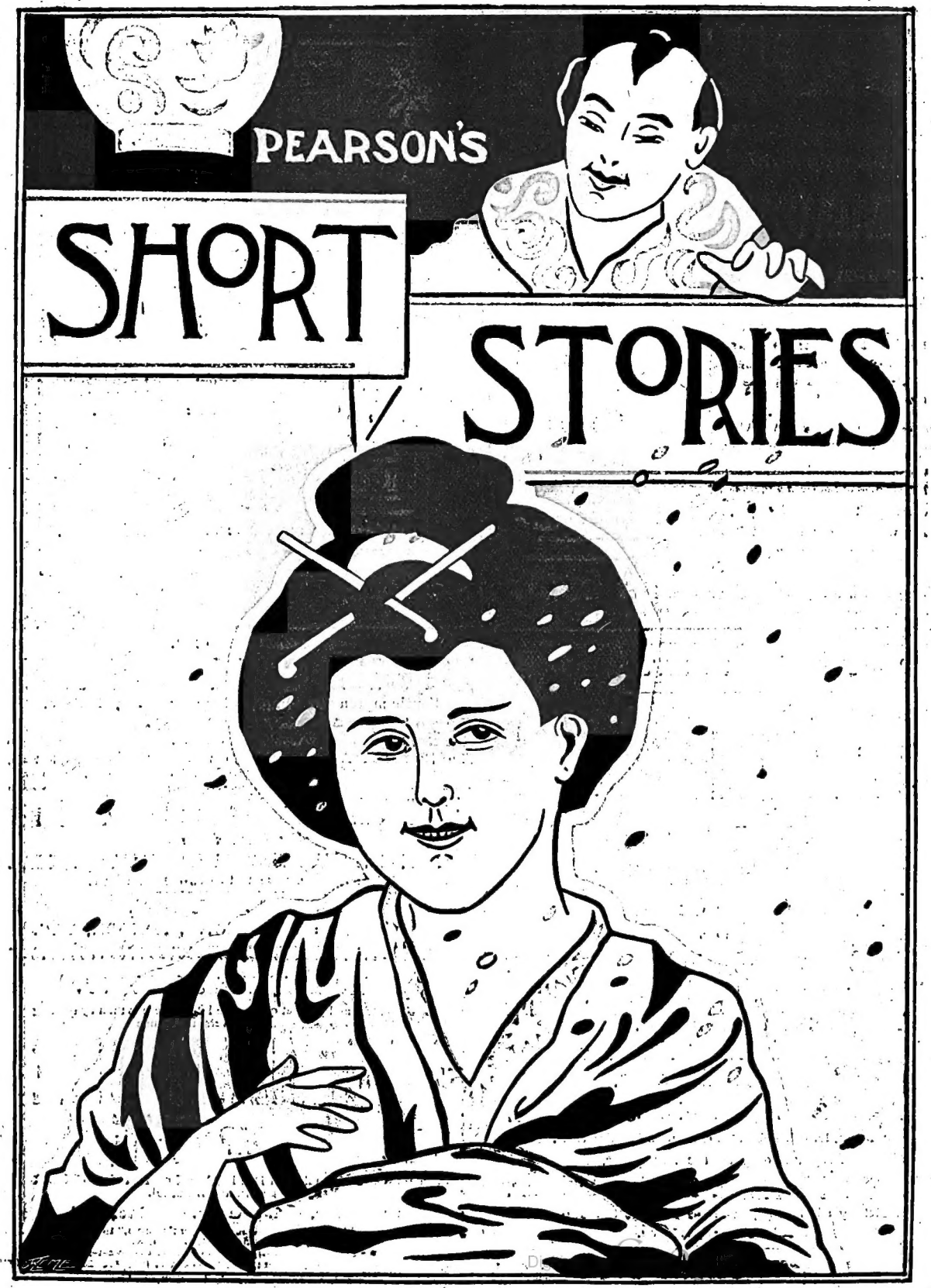
No. 658.) For Week Ending August 10th, 1901. (One Penny



KAPUTINE

The Best & Safest Remedy for

HEADACHE.

NURSE HILL, of the London Association of Nurses, writes:

"I have seen Kaputine administered to many patients, and can truly say it is a remedy which should have a place in every household."

All Leading Chemists sell KAPUTINE, 1/-. Samples One Penny.

If your Chemist has not KAPUTINE send his name and address to KAPUTINE; HUDDERSFIELD, and we will send you a SHILLING PACKET FREE.

WORTH A CROWN A DOSE.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,
Sick Headache, Constipation, Wind and Pains in Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver, and Female Ailments.

SALE OVER SIX MILLION BOXES YEARLY.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

This is what you get with

MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS

Makes the most delicious and wholesome **HERB BEER**

There is no **PURER**
There is no **BETTER**
There is no **STRONGER**
and
There is no **CHEAPER**

Agents Wanted Everywhere.

Makes **MORE BEER** and **BETTER BEER** than any other Extract.

Sold everywhere. Bottles, Post Free, 9 Stamps.

NEWBALL & MASON, Nottingham.

ESTABLISHED 1851.

BIRKBECK BANK,

Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London.

2½% **DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS** 2½%
repayable on demand.

The BIRKBECK ALMANACK, with full particulars, post free.
FRANCIS RAVENSCROFT, *Manager.*

"ALKAN" Cures in ONE Minute

By Inhalation

TOOTHACHE, FACIAL NEURALGIA, NEURALGIA OF THE EAR.

Price: 1st Size, 2/9; 2nd Size, 4/6 per Bottle.

B. & G. ALKAN,
General Depot: 150 STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

Do your Dyeing at home.

It costs little, and you get quicker and better results than by sending to dyers, if you use

New Style Old Style

MAYPOLE SOAP DYES

which are simple to handle, and Dye **BLACK or ANY COLOUR** Fast, Permanent, and Beautiful.

Any Colour, 4d. a Cake. Black 6d.

Send for Free Booklet, "THE PERFECTION OF HOME DYEING," to The Maypole Co., Ltd., 9 Cumming Street, London, N.

SHORT STORIES

No. 658.] For the Week Ending August 10th, 1901. [ONE PENNY.

THE
Adventures
OF AN
Actress.

"Then listen!" All the pent-up scorn of years seemed in the girl's voice.

(See thrilling story on next page.)

Digitized by Google

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ACTRESS.

Beautiful Hazel Harlow's Flight.

By DONOVAN MART.

CHAPTER I.

A MELLOW ribbon of light straggled out from the open window into the summer night. All round the panes the roses and honey-suckle clambered. A low rampart of shrubs screened the lower half of the casement.

Voices floated out from inside the room into the peaceful country air. Not a soul was about to hear the bitter words that were passing between the two occupants of the chamber, an elderly, red-faced man, and a young girl of almost unsurpassable beauty.

Not a soul! Ah yes, for beneath the shadow of the shrubs crouched the figure of a man, a silent, strenuous figure, who, with nerves a-quiver listened to every syllable of the conversation meant for no stranger's ear.

And this is what he heard. The man was speaking, his coarse voice coarser still from the effects of liquor, anger insistent in every tone of his unstudied speech.

"And I say you shall! What have I reared ye for? Merely to sit at your ease and eat of my bread, while I toil. No, my wench, no! I'm not to be played with! Hear me once and for all. Either you marry Horace Caldecott and live at The Hall, in riches, or——" a horrid expletive broke from his lips and finished his sentence far more eloquently than any words could have done.

The girl had risen and, with a wondrous unstudied grace, stood before the enraged farmer, the splendid outline of her figure and the clear-cut, noble purity of her profile silhouetted against the light of the lamp on the table at her side.

"And I tell you, father, I will not marry Horace Caldecott, not if he were a thousand times richer than he is. I will never sell my hand and heart to such a man. Sooner than that I will go out into the world and earn my own bread. You can beat me, starve me, do what you will to me, but you cannot make me sell my honour to pay your debts."

The farmer took a long draught from a beer-mug at his elbow. His eyes gleamed like a beast's. A laugh broke from his lips.

"Be careful, Hazel!" he said hoarsely, "or whip you I will. Earn your own bread! Can a heifer turn race-horse? No, my girl, you marry Squire Caldecott."

"Then listen!" All the pent-up scorn of years seemed in the girl's voice. "To-morrow I leave you for London. I have given you warning and perhaps a day will come when you will regret the moment you drove your motherless child out into the world. To-morrow we part, perhaps for ever."

With an oath the now thoroughly drunken man staggered to his feet. The eavesdropper outside the window half rose with a muttered exclamation. Neither father nor daughter had eyes for him, however, and he fell back into a crouching position.

Farmer Harlow's arm shot out, and his open hand caught the girl full upon the face. With a faint cry of fear she staggered backwards. Her involuntary movement proved Harlow's undoing. He fell forward at full length upon the stone-flagged floor of the farm kitchen.

When he dragged himself up again he was alone.

"The jade's gone!" he hiccupped with an oath. "Good riddance! She'll talk sense in the morning. And if she don't, well I'll call the squire."

He stumbled towards the open window, and the silent listener without, in sudden alarm sprang to his feet, and scurried away.

"What was that?" muttered the farmer, trying to collect his fuddled senses.

He peered out, blinking owl-wise into the darkness. All was still.

"Must have been a dog!" he murmured. "Hang the cur!"

With which charitable remark he stumbled off to bed.

CHAPTER II.

AT the best of times Farmer Harlow was a sound sleeper. Heavy with beer as he was when he shambled up to his bed-chamber on the night of the final altercation with his daughter, it is not to be wondered at that the sun was high in the heavens when he awoke.

He had a somewhat hazy recollection of the last night's dispute. But his resentment against his daughter ran high. He remembered that she had flouted his parental authority.

"I'll learn her!" he muttered resentfully, as he struggled into his clothes.

But a surprise was in store for him when he descended to the parlour, in which he usually had breakfast with his daughter. In place of Hazel's queen-like figure and

"Adventures of an Actress" begin to-day.

Digitized by Google

beautiful face, he was confronted by old Martha, the factotum of Harlow Farm, on whose face was an expression of the blankest terror and consternation.

He glared resentfully in her wrinkled, careworn face.

"Hullo!" he growled. "What's amiss? Where's Hazel?"

For a moment or so the woman struggled with speech. Then she covered her face with her apron, and sinking down into a chair, burst into a passion of weeping.

To a man of the farmer's rough, uncouth mind—it was always a marvel to the village folk that he could have been the father of such a peerless girl as Hazel—tears in women were an especial abomination.

"Stop your snivelling!" he roared, "and speak like a sane woman!"

With an effort the old woman checked her sobs. "Hazel's gone!" she faltered out.

"Gone! What d'ye mean?" a livid flush overspread the farmer's bucolic face.

"Her room's empty! She's nowhere about the farm, and—she left this piece of paper on her pincushion."

Harlow snatched the note out of the woman's hand. It was unaddressed and ran as follows:

I have gone. After what you said and did last night Harlow Farm is no home for me. Do not try to find me. Good-bye. I forgive you.—HAZEL.

It was some few moments before the farmer could take in the full purport of the note.

Then enlightenment came to him.

"It's a trick!" he cried, "a — trick! I forgive you! Did ever man read the like. But I've not done with her yet. I'll find her. Squire Caldecott will help me!" And without pausing to put a hat on his head, or take bite or sup, he dashed out of the farm-house and down the dusty lane like a man possessed.

In the meanwhile what had become of Hazel? Sick at heart the girl had crept up to her bedroom, and locking the door had thrown herself down upon the bed, her whole being afire with the abuse to which she had been subjected.

If ever she had felt her lonely, motherless condition she felt it then. What could she do? How could she shake off the hated shackles that bound her to the farm and the hateful lover that her father would sell her to.

Her brain began to work quickly. What could she do? Then she remembered an incident long forgotten, how a girl, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer had gone to London and become an actress. What the girl had done or how she had got on she knew not.

But her mind, once set upon a certain train of thought, began to build upon that one foundation. What another had done she would do. She was beautiful—she could not help knowing that—young, strong, untainted by the world. She had had a good education, had always lived in a world of her own. London! Yes that was to be her goal. But where to go? Then she remembered that her father had a brother living in London, a man she had not seen since childhood, but whose address she knew. She would go to him and ask his help; would tell him her sad story, how her father had got into debt, how to retrieve his fortunes he had determined his daughter should marry a rich *roué*—Squire Caldecott. She had about twenty pounds of her own. That would surely be enough to maintain her for a while. There was a train to London at nine. Her father would sleep long after his potations. She would pack a hand-bag with her necessaries and be off.

In such hurried sequence did her thoughts bear her on, until at last her mind was made up, and she only longed for the morning when she could embark upon her new resolution.

She was up at six. Noiselessly she dressed and packed her hand-bag. Then she stole downstairs, safe in the assurance that her father was sound asleep, and that old Martha would not be down before seven.

A hurried breakfast in the larder, and nothing more remained but to be off.

Good-bye old farmstead! The tears gathered in the girl's blue eyes.

It was a glorious summer morning. The station was nearly three miles away, so that there was no need for hurry, yet Hazel almost ran down the little lane that led from the farm-house to the high road beyond.

The farm was nearly a mile away from the village of Honeycote.

No one was in sight as the girl turned into the road, and hurried on to where a path struck off from the highway across the fields, a short cut to the railway station.

It was almost eight o'clock when the station buildings became visible through the trees that fringed them. The girl sat down for a while to rest, for she had an hour before the train was due.

Half an hour passed away, and the girl rose to her feet. She was safe from pursuit and she felt that she might just as well wait the remaining time before the train started in the station.

The sound of wheels along the road caused her to pause where she was. She could see through the hedge, that fringed the meadow, that a trap was driving smartly along the highway and coming from the station.

"Squire Caldecott's dog-cart," she murmured to herself. "What does that mean? The groom's driving. The Squire's not in the trap."

A sudden fear caught at her heart. Supposing that the man she feared and hated most on earth was going to London by the nine o'clock train!

She lingered no longer, but hastened onwards to the station, determined to know the worst.

But her fears seemed groundless. No one was in the station save a sleepy porter who was taking the duties of ticket-clerk as well. He gave Hazel her ticket without comment. Evidently she was to be the only passenger.

The train steamed slowly into the wayside station and drew up with many protesting snorts. Hazel sprang into an empty third class compartment, and shrank back against the cushions with a beating heart.

The train puffed off again almost immediately. A great sigh of relief fell from the girl's lips; not one thought did she give to what lay before her, to all the unknown dangers and difficulties that might lie in her path in the metropolis. She had shaken off the shackles of her old life, of the father who had treated her so shamefully, of the unwelcome lover whose affection was only a sordid passion kindled into being by her beauty; and an unplumbed abyss of Fate stretched out before her mental vision.

It was a three hours' run to Paddington. Before the terminus the train filled up somewhat, and Hazel was not permitted to retain the compartment vacant for her-

Digitized by Google

self. Yet her thoughts were too varied to allow her to bestow more than a passing glance upon her fellow passengers. Yet the girl's beauty did not fail to impress itself upon her travelling-companions.

The rich colouring of her cheeks and lips, the ivory whiteness of her even teeth, the soft peach-like bloom that the country air had painted on her face, her blue eyes and wavy chestnut hair were some of the components that lent an added charm to the queen-like figure and indisputable beauty of Hazel Harlow.

At last the terminus was reached, and the second stage of the young girl's battle with the unknown was accomplished. The platform was crowded with porters and the usual crowd of expectant people, all intent in finding the particular travellers they had come to welcome to London.

Hazel stepped out of the carriage, and for a moment stood nerveless upon the crowded platform, overwhelmed by the din and bustle, such a contrast to the quiet peacefulness of Harlow Farm.

A porter recalled her to her senses. "Shall I get a cab, miss?" the fellow said.

"Oh, yes, please," answered the girl, "and will you ask him to drive to Mr. Joseph Harlow's, 46 Chester Street, Bayswater."

The man beckoned to a four-wheeler. Hazel was so intent upon making sure of the cab that was to carry her to her unknown relative that she did not notice that a tall stranger had drawn close to her side, a well-dressed man with a slouch hat drawn over his eyes, who had listened intently to the words that passed between her and the porter.

The cab drew up against the kerb, and the girl entered the vehicle. The stranger hurriedly slipped round in front of the horse, and muttered a few words to the jehu who hesitated for a moment, and then slipped off his box. Thrusting his head inside the cab window—Hazel having settled herself back against the cushions—he said:

"Just a minute, miss, I've got to give a message to a mate of mine."

The unsuspecting girl smiled sweetly into the man's face.

"All right, cabman," she said and then her eyes gazed listlessly out upon the stream of vehicles and people that thronged the station.

This then was London. How noisy it seemed. For a few seconds a great despondency crept over her. She felt her loneliness acutely.

Then her natural buoyancy, coupled with the self-confidence that all pure-minded women feel, came to her aid. She shook off the feeling of depression, and gave herself up to dreams about the future.

In the meanwhile the stranger and the cabman were engaged in an earnest confabulation.

Then the unknown slipped a piece of money into the other man's hand and smiled. The cabby nodded with a somewhat dubious expression, pocketed the coin, and turned away.

Immediately the stranger leapt into a neighbouring hansom, and rattled away at full speed.

Hazel's driver clambered ponderously on to the box of his "growler," cracked his whip and urged his somewhat jaded steed forward. In a few minutes the station was left behind and Hazel found herself amid all the roar of the London streets, a din that made her pulses quicken, and the young blood within her to dance.

"I wonder what my uncle is like," ran her thoughts as the cab rattled onwards. "Suppose that he refuses to see me! Or suppose that he has changed his address! I shall be absolutely friendless and alone then. How does one set about getting on the stage I wonder! Perhaps he will tell me all that. Anyhow I have said good-bye to father's cruelty and to the horrid fate of being Horace Caldecott's wife."

Poor girl! Well was it that a merciful Providence hid the future from her glorious blue eyes. Had she only had an inkling of the dangers and difficulties that beset her path, she would in all probability rather have sought the refuge of the noisy streets through which she was passing, than have pressed onwards to the unknown!

Suddenly the cab drew up before an imposing portico, There was no number visible on the street door. "'Ere's 46 Chester Street, miss," said the cabman alighting from his box and opening the carriage door. "Five shillings please miss."

Hazel paid the exorbitant fare from her little store without even a suspicion that she had been basely overcharged. Her heart was beating fiercely within her. She mounted the steps that led up to the entrance door as though in a dream, and rang the bell.

A youth in buttons answered the summons. "Does Mr. Harlow live here?" the girl asked in her sweet voice.

The boy seemed staggered, as well he might, by such a vision of loveliness.

"Yes, miss," he answered. "Please to step in."

Hazel gave vent to a great sigh of thankfulness. Her fears seemed quite allayed by the calm assurance.

She found herself in a spacious entrance-hall, leading to a broad flight of stairs that evidently led direct to the upper part of the mansion.

The page opened a door to the left of the vestibule.

"Will you step in here miss," he said; and walking through the chamber, a sort of ante room, he opened a door that led to yet another apartment beyond, evidently a study, to judge from the well-filled book-shelves and roll-top desk in the corner.

"Who shall I say, miss?" said the boy, and Hazel noticed that he spoke with evidently suppressed mirth.

"Miss Hazel Harlow, his niece from Harlow Farm," answered the girl eagerly.

The page retired, and she was left alone.

She had not seen her uncle since childhood, and her recollections of him were rather hazy. She knew that her father and he did not get on together, but the cause of their feud she had never known. She pictured him as a venerable, grey-haired gentleman, with ruddy visage and kindly blue eyes.

Five minutes went by. Then a hand was placed on the knob of the door that opened into the room, and by which she had just entered.

The next moment and the door swung open, and a man entered hastily.

Hazel sprang up from the chair in which she had seated herself, and a cry of horror left her lips.

The colour ebbed away from her face, and for a moment she could scarcely believe the evidence of her own eyes.

For in place of the venerable face she had pictured in her dreams, she found herself gazing into the face of the one man she had more reason to detest and fear than any other in the world—Squire Horace Caldecott!

Beautiful Hazel Harlow will interest you deeply.

Digitized by Google

With a smile that rendered his saturnine, dissipated face more repellent than it usually was to the girl's eyes, Caldecott advanced towards her.

"Welcome to London, my dear!" he said with cruel pleasantry.

Hazel uttered a cry, like a stricken animal. Then it was true! It was no vision! It was for this she had fled away so stealthily from Harlow Farm, to fall straight into a cunning, a diabolical trap!

"Squire Caldecott!" she murmured brokenly. "You here! What does it mean? Where is my uncle?"

Caldecott laughed, a devil's laugh.

"Listen, my beautiful one," he said, mockingly, "and I will tell you what love can do!"

The girl drew herself up to the full height of her queenly figure. All the latent force that lay behind her sweet maidenhood seemed to blaze out of her eyes.

"Love from your lips is only a base profanation of the word, Mr. Caldecott!" she said coldly.

Instinctively Caldecott quailed before her words and gesture.

"Yet you shall hear me!" he answered raspingly. Then he went on, in quick, hurried speech: "Last night I overheard the conversation between your father and you. I was beneath the open window. I heard you say that you would never marry me, that you would go out into the world and seek your own bread. I saw your father strike you. I knew that was the climax. You said decisively—your father was too deep in his cups to note your words—that you would leave 'on the morrow,' would go to London. I knew well you would go by the earliest train. I travelled by that train, too. You did not see me"—like a flash Hazel remembered the mysterious appearance of Caldecott's dog-cart—"you were too much wrapped up in your own thoughts. It was I who directed your cabman to drive here. There you have the whole story. And now I have you my wilful darling. For Love finds out the way, in spite of all you may say."

Suppressed passion gleamed out from the man's dark eyes. His whole frame quivered. Never had the girl upon whom his desires were centred seemed more beautiful, more alluring than at that moment, when helpless, alone, unfriended she stood before her hated lover, like a dove in the grip of a falcon.

With a despairing gesture, that must assuredly have turned the heart of a man less unprincipled than Horace Caldecott, the girl looked about her, in vain seeking for some escape from her persecutor.

The squire noted her actions. Again he smiled.

"No, no, sweetheart!" he said, "have no misapprehensions. You are here in my own house. All the servants here are in my employ. If you scream no one will hear you, and if they do"—he shrugged his shoulders meaningly—"Horace Caldecott is well known, rich, influential, respected. While you"—then his voice

"Valerie!" he muttered hoarsely. "What do you want here?"

Oblige the Editor by passing "Short Stories" on to somebody else.

Digitized by Google

changed—"come, I do not wish to harm you. I love you too well for that. Only consent to be my wife, and we will return to Harlow Farm in an hour, and no one need know that you sought my protection, unattended, alone"—there was a horrid significance in his voice—"here in the heart of London."

His words stung the girl to hot resentment. All the purity of her unspotted womanhood leapt up in her voice, as she answered him:

"Vile I knew to be, Squire Caldecott, but now your villainy is absolutely unmasked. I see the trap into which you have led me. Well, do your worst. Sooner than marry you I would kill myself; and that I assuredly will do unless you release me immediately."

A half-veiled oath escaped from Caldecott's lips. He took a step forward. His voice was thick with passion and thwarted intent as he said:

"So that's your answer to my offer, is it. Very well then," his sentence was never finished, for at that moment the door of the room suddenly opened to admit a woman, a stylishly dressed figure, clad in all the extravagant finery of excessive female vanity.

Caldecott swung round as the new comer entered, with an exclamation of mingled rage and apprehension. His cheeks went pale as he saw who it was.

"Valerie!" he muttered, hoarsely, "what do you want here?"

The woman laughed aloud. Her eyes, filled with a sudden jealousy, fixed themselves on Hazel's queenly figure and lovely face.

"Who is this, Horace?" she said peremptorily. In a moment Hazel darted forward.

"Save me!" she cried imploringly, "save me if you are a woman with a woman's heart."

But Caldecott interposed, and thrust himself almost roughly between the two women.

"No melodrama here," he said savagely, "this lady"—indicating Hazel with a wave of the hand—"and I have business to transact. I will explain all to you, Valerie, in ten minutes."

He almost pushed the woman towards the door in his anxiety to spare himself a further scene.

"Business!" sneered Valerie, who showed no inclination to be thus cavalierly dismissed. "The lady seems wonderfully anxious to transact it! You did not expect to see me, Horace. You never said you were coming to town. What does it all mean?"

"It means," cried Hazel, "that this villain has trapped me here, that——"

But again Caldecott cut her short almost brutally.

"Come with me, Valerie," he said persuasively, "and I will explain everything. Surely you know me well enough by this time to believe what I say." He took hold of the woman's arm and led her towards the door.

The black eyes of the unknown woman gleamed resentfully at the young girl. Then they turned towards Caldecott's handsome face.

"I will come with you," she muttered, "and hear what you have to say. But if you play me false, look out for yourself. I am not a child to be played with, understand that!"

"Yes, yes," answered Caldecott, "I know. Come!"

He threw open the door of the room and the woman slipped out before him. Hazel darted forward with a cry. Too late! The door clashed to in her face, and she heard the sound of a key shooting back the wards of the lock into their socket, as Caldecott sprang out close on the heels of his comrade.

For a moment she stood motionless, as though turned to stone. What could she do? She was trapped indeed, and beyond help.

For a few seconds the idea came to her to scream for help. Then she remembered Caldecott's words, and realised that such a course of action would be futile. Her eager eyes darted round the room. Was there no way of escape.

She darted towards the window, her hand instinctively catching hold of the little hand-bag that contained her few belongings.

Then she made a discovery. The window proved to be the upper part of a door that opened out on to an iron verandah, with creeper-covered railings, from which a short flight of steps led into a small dreary London garden. At the far end of the garden, which consisted of a grass plot and a few stunted shrubs, was a low brick wall that formed the boundary between the enclosure and a similar piece of ground backing a house of corresponding dimensions to Caldecott's.

All this Hazel's quick, country-trained eyes grasped in a fraction of the time taken in the telling. She saw furthermore that the house opposite her line of vision had a corresponding iron verandah and steps, also leading to a glass-paned door.

In a moment a wild idea came to her. She tried the door. To her joy it was unlocked. Noiselessly she opened it and slipped out on to the verandah. The next moment she had bounded down the steps and was speeding, deer-footed, across the tiny grass plot.

CHAPTER III.

Concealing his chagrin at thus being interrupted in his fell scheme, Caldecott—somewhat uneasy as to the advisability of leaving Hazel alone in her prison, yet never dreaming that she would make any successful endeavour to escape—conducted Valerie to a room not far from the one in which Hazel had been locked.

"And now," said the woman, when they were alone, "for an explanation. Who is that girl?"

"My dear Valerie," said Caldecott in honeyed tones, "the story is soon told. She is the daughter of one of my tenants in the country, who has run away from home. I found her, and was in the act of trying to persuade her to return to her father when you interrupted me. Naturally she was annoyed and tried to kick up a fuss. There, my jealous little darling, you have the whole story," and drawing the woman to him he kissed her with apparent warmth upon the cheeks.

"Is that all Horace?" cried Valerie. "Will you swear to me that's all? You have not been enamoured of her girlish beauty?—for beautiful she is. You have not been endeavouring to find a substitute for Valerie Bellairs?"

"What a jealous little woman it is!" came the answer with seductive tenderness. "How can you, Valerie, the Queen of the London Stage, believe that Horace Caldecott can be torn from his allegiance by the airs and graces of a country bumpkin's daughter? Have you known me for so long to doubt my sincerity?" with wonderful cunning Caldecott hid the impatience that in reality consumed his being.

The actress flung her arms round the man's neck, and pressed her burning lips to his.

"Adventures of an Actress" begin to-day.

Digitized by Google

"You mean it, Horace?" she cried, passionately. "Your heart is still mine?"

"Yes, yes, you know it! And now, dearest, let me go and try and persuade this girl to return to her anxious father. Do you leave me now. I will come and see you to-morrow."

Slowly Valerie drew herself apart from the man, who, with all his villainy, she loved with an intentness worthy of a better cause.

"I will go," she said almost resentfully, "and I will trust you."

Caldecott breathed a sigh of heartfelt relief.

"There speaks my sensible little Valerie," he said fondly. "And now let me see you to the street-door. This unpalatable business before me must be settled Then my mind will be easy and I shall be yours, heart and soul again."

He drew her to him, and kissed her with a great show of tenderness, the plaything of an idle hour, the woman he had tricked and cheated into a belief of his unalterable love.

And Valerie, like many another woman who had fixed her affections upon an idol, was blind to the fact that her idol had feet of clay. The hour of her awakening had not yet come.

She suffered the plausible villain to escort her to the door.

"*Au revoir*!" she murmured, with one last glance from her brilliant eyes. "*Au revoir* till to-morrow."

The next moment she had gone.

An evil smile played round the corners of the Squire's lips.

"And now for my caged bird," he muttered. "Curse Valerie and her meddlesomeness! There will be complications ahead! Bah, I'm sick to death of the woman! It's Hazel I want, Hazel with the damask cheek, the turquoise eye, the figure of a nymph. And she's in my power."

He hurried back to the room in which he had left his prisoner, and pausing outside the door, listened intently for a few moments before turning the key. Supposing that the girl, grown desperate, had determined on springing upon him as he entered. She was vigorous, strong and lithe as a panther. Instinctively his hand went to his hip-pocket to draw forth a tiny revolver, a wicked little weapon, the polished barrel of which glinted brightly in the half-light.

Not a sound could he hear from within the room. Softly he turned the key in the well-oiled wards. The next moment he had thrown open the door, and bounded into the room.

For a moment he could hardly believe the unimpeachable evidence of his eyes. The room was empty!

A cry escaped his lips! She must be hiding in some corner of the room. Yet there was no hiding place for such a queenly figure. Only a cat could have hidden behind the desk. His eyes went to the glass-door. It was ajar!

He dashed across the apartment and peered out into the tiny garden. Something caught his eye on the grass-plot, just beneath the boundary wall at the extreme end. In a momemt he was down the iron steps and across the grass. The "something" was a woman's glove! In a moment he realised how his victim had escaped.

For a few seconds he stood irresolute, murder in his heart.

Should he leap the wall into the next garden and forcibly procure an entry into the house beyond. He placed a hand upon the low wall.

Then a new idea struck him. He dashed back the way he had come like the wind.

The girl had given him the slip—he realised that. But she had not seen the last of him yet. No, no, a thousand times no. He had not schemed so deeply for naught. All his plans should not fall to the ground like a house of cards. There was still time to retrieve the ground that had been so suddenly cut from beneath his feet by the unlucky advent of Valerie Bellairs.

CHAPTER IV.

In the meanwhile we must return to Hazel.

To a girl of her country training, with all her muscles rendered supple and strong by open air life she had hitherto led, the low four-foot wall before her presented but few obstacles.

Without casting a look behind her—and had she done so she would have seen the tell tale glove she had dropped in her haste—without pausing for one instant she swung herself up and over the wall, casting her hand-bag before her. Another moment and she was in the other garden.

Fear of the man she fled from leant her wings and gave her courage. Without slackening she swung the bag up again, and flew across the intervening space between the iron steps that led up to the unknown house.

She could not stop to wonder what lay behind that glass door. Her one idea was escape from Caldecott's toils. The next moment her hand was on the door knob.

The door was unlocked. With a sob of thankfulness she dashed inside the room and closed the door behind her.

Her unceremonious entry caused the only occupant of the room, a young man seated at a table reading, to spring from his chair with a cry of the blankest amazement.

The beautiful apparition that had so mysteriously broken in upon his privacy was assuredly ground enough for his consternation.

"Good heavens!" he cried, "who are you? And where do you come from?"

Hazel tottered forward with a blanched face. She had just time to take in the fact that the young man before her was tall and good-looking, and then her harassed brain, added to the fact that no food had passed her lips since the hurried meal of the morning, gave way.

An inarticulate cry came from her lips. The next moment she fell forward, in a dead faint, right into the arms of the dumfounded young man.

When she came to her senses again she was lying upon a sofa, and the unknown youth was bending over her with evident solicitude apparent in his open grey eyes. In his hand was a glass of water, with which apparently he had been vigorously besprinkling her face.

The colour ebbed back to the girl's face. She sat up and gazing piteously into her unknown protector's face at once began her story.

Without reserve she told him everything, how she had been treated at home, how she had determined to seek

Digitized by Google

refuge in flight, how she had been tricked by Caldecott, how she had escaped from the villain's clutches.

"There, sir, is my story," she said in conclusion. "I can only ask of you forgiveness and indulgence. I am friendless, alone, in your hands. I only did what I have just done because my case was so desperate. And yet something in your face tells me that you are not the man to betray the confidence of an absolutely helpless girl."

The young man drew in a long breath. How beautiful the girl was! And what a sad, terrible story was hers! All the romance in his nature leapt up within him.

"Eric," she said, in a musical, cultured voice, "what is the meaning of this?"

The young man, with eager haste, blurted out the story he had just heard.

With ever-growing astonishment his sister listened. When he had finished she went over to Hazel's side and took her hand.

"We live here alone, my brother and I," she said, "Monteith is our name. You look tired and worn. Will you come and have lunch with us? Then we can talk."

Tears of gratitude and unexpected joy dimmed the lustre of Hazel's blue eyes.

"Oh, if you only knew all that your words mean to me, Miss Monteith," she said with heartfelt gratitude. "I am tired and hungry. A few moments ago I was without hope as well. But now——" words failed her, and Alice Monteith, taking her by the hand led her from the room.

Eric Monteith went to the glass door and gazed out at the house opposite.

"The cur!" he muttered. "I've a good mind to go round with a horsewhip! How beautiful she is! And what a tragic, wonderful story." He turned away, taking the precaution to lock the door leading to the garden. His one desire was to see once more the girl whom fate had so miraculously thrown in his path.

During lunch Alice and her brother drew fuller details of her history from Hazel's confiding lips.

"And you mean to go on the stage?" queried Alice.

"Yes, to earn my own living. I must, I will! I cannot be a drag to anyone, and I feel that if I am given a chance I can become a good actress." So answered Hazel.

"But this uncle of yours, will you not try to find him out?" queried Eric.

The next moment she fell forward in a dead faint.

"Miss——"

"Harlow," put in the girl.

"Miss Harlow, I don't know what to say I——" but here came a new interruption. The door opened and a young girl, clad in walking costume and a smart "picture" hat, entered the room.

The young man sprang to meet her.

"Alice!" he cried, with flaming cheeks. "Miss Harlow! My sister!"

The newcomer's astonishment can well be imagined. Her eyes went from her brother to the strange maiden and from her back to the young man again.

The girl hesitated.

"I do not want to throw myself on anyone's bounty," she answered. "And now I have found so kind and noble a pair of benefactors—I—well perhaps you will advise me instead what I had best do."

Silence followed this speech for a few moments. Then Eric, looking across at his sister's face and reading encouragement there, said:

"We are orphans, Miss Harlow, and possessed of private means. If we can help you——"

"Not with money," broke in Hazel with sudden pleading, "I have enough for my present wants. If

Beautiful Hazel Harlow will interest you deeply.

Digitized by Google

only you can recommend me a good, cheap lodging, and show me how I am to set about going on the stage, that is all I want."

"But you have no experience, Miss Harlow!" cried Eric. "How can you hope for any encouragement from a manager."

"I can begin at the bottom of the ladder," answered Hazel bravely. "I have youth and strength in my favour. I am not afraid of work."

Eric was silent. He could not tell this pure minded, innocent girl what was in his heart, of all the terrible trials and dangers that lay before her even were she to begin at "the bottom of the ladder."

He knew, as did his sister, all the sordid pettinesses and tribulations that must lie in the path of such a *débutante* as Hazel.

To think of this lovely girl tempting fortune upon the thorny road that led to theatrical pre-eminence almost made him give voice to the tumult of apprehension that surged up in his brain.

Yet a glance at the strong, pure face told him how futile would any argument of his against her plans be.

In the fancied security of that spacious London dining-room — and to look at Hazel was to believe that she must somehow, notwithstanding her early environment, have been born for higher things than the obscurity of Harlow Farm—she seemed to have already forgotten Horace Caldecott. Little did she know, poor girl, of the depth of that villain's resources.

"I cannot trespass on your hospitality for long," she said at last. "If only you will add to the debt of gratitude I already owe you, and put me in the way of finding a reliable lodging, and how then to set about embarking in theatrical life, well—I can't say all that my heart would have of thankfulness."

"If your mind is made up, Miss Harlow," answered Eric impetuously, "and nothing that we can say will dissuade you from your purpose, we shall be only too proud to help you. We will this afternoon take you to reliable and cheap lodgings. To-morrow I will, if you will allow me, wait upon you and escort you to one of the best known of the theatrical agents, Mark Danvers. He will enter your name on his books, for a fee, and will let you know whether he hears of a *rôle* for you. But I warn you, your inexperience will be a great hindrance to you. And at the best you will have to content yourself with a subordinate position in a travelling company." He hesitated, unwilling to betray more of the repugnance he felt in thus giving her advice.

But Hazel's face was radiant.

"Oh, thank you! thank you!" she cried, and the look she gave the young man, only fired his impressionable heart the more. As for Alice her heart grew sad within her. It was impossible to gaze upon the lovely countenance of the girl, and not say: "Oh, the pity of it, the pity of it!"

After lunch the would-be actress was all impatience to be gone. So unsophisticated, so artless was she that her one idea now was to show these two young Samaritans her gratitude by ridding them of the fancied encumbrance—herself.

At last Eric realised that further procrastination was rendered impossible.

With something like a sigh he rose from his seat.

"Shall we accompany Miss Harlow to Mrs. Bryant's?" he said to his sister.

Alice nodded.

"But first," Eric said warningly, "let me see if the coast is clear. Describe this man, Caldecott, to me, Miss Harlow, please," he asked

A shadow crossed Hazel's face, and something like a shudder ran through her frame. In short, succinct terms she painted her hated lover's picture.

Eric went across to the door. "Stay here," he urged, "and I will go and look in the street to see whether the coast be clear."

He turned and as he did so he realised that the girl who had flown to his house for refuge from the villain who had entrapped her, had stolen his heart.

If ever there was a case of "love at first sight," it was his. And instead of being able to tell her his love, he must let her go from him without a word, out into the cruel world to face heaven alone knew what terrible dangers and ordeals.

Could he do that? No never. It could never be that she had flashed meteor-like in all her radiant beauty across his path, merely to disappear into the unknown. No, that should never be, while strength and money were his.

So thinking he opened the street door and gazed down and up the practically deserted street, only a few people were about; no one to answer the description of Horace Caldecott, only an unkempt tramp limping along the pavement, a ragged unkempt mortal who gazed furtively up into the young man's face with hungry eyes.

Eric went back.

"The coast is clear!" he said somewhat gloomily, "Let us go."

And so the three set out to seek a haven with Mrs. Bryant, a motherly soul, and at one time a servant to the Monteiths.

Neither of the trio cast another glance at the unkempt tramp that Eric's careless eyes had lighted upon a few moments before.

They didn't see the wolfish gleam that came from his black eyes, or notice the fact that he shambled along some twenty or thirty paces in their wake.

Thus ends Hazel Harlow's first adventure in her desire for emancipation from her cruel home ties. She is now about to embark on the first stage of becoming an actress. A thrilling adventure was to be hers in this first plunge into the unknown. What this was will be related in next week's *Short Stories*, under the name of: "A Devil's Lure."

What Are Your Chances of Success?

Have you failed to make a success of your work? If so, that's probably because you have mistaken your vocation. Your handwriting will tell your natural bent. Send a specimen to—

RANEE,
21 Pearson's Buildings,
Henrietta Street,
London, W.C.

Inclose six penny stamps and a stamped addressed envelope with each specimen of handwriting.

Digitized by Google

The Disappearance of Mr. Mortimer Howard.

THE little town of Lidford was shaken by the news.

It created a profound sensation there. The war, the election of a Board of Guardian for the district, and every other topic, local and general, was thrust into the background for the time being.

Nothing else was talked about but the disappearance of Mr. Mortimer Howard, a prominent figure in those parts, and a man who was at the head and tail of everything that went on in the place.

The local journals were full of this all-absorbing affair, and in the next few days brief reports of the case found their way into the London papers.

From the meagre details published I learned that Mr. Howard and two companions had gone out duck-shooting on the fatal afternoon.

Lidford is situated near the mouth of a tidal river, and the party had crossed in a small boat to the marshy flats on the opposite shore, where wild fowl of all sorts are plentiful.

In coming back, late in the evening, the boat was upset in some unaccountable manner and the whole three thrown into the water.

Mr. Howard's two companions managed to save themselves by clinging on to the little craft, as it floated bottom upwards, but nothing more was seen of the unfortunate gentleman himself.

That was all I knew of the case so far; and it was taken for granted, of course, that Mr. Mortimer Howard, not having succeeded in getting a hold on the boat, had gone under while his companions were still struggling for their lives.

I was destined, however, to hear more of the affair very soon, and to put this theory to test.

Some few weeks later a friend of mine named Hallowes, who was connected with one of the big insurance companies in the city, called upon me late in the evening.

He was an uncommonly smart fellow in his own particular line, and though rather young for the post his directors had recently made him an inspector. I found that he had some very interesting things to tell me.

"You've heard of this boating accident up north?" he said, as he sat down.

"Which one was that?" I asked.

"Why the one in which Mr. Mortimer Howard was supposed to have lost his life."

"Supposed?" I questioned. "I thought there was no doubt about it, one way or the other."

"Ah, but there is, and a very considerable doubt too," he answered. "That is precisely what has brought me here."

"Your people are interested in this matter, then?"

"They are; to the tune of three thousands or so."

"His life was insured for that amount?"

"With us—yes."

"Recently."

"Within the past twelve months."

This was getting interesting. On the face of it, it looked a bit fishy that a man who had effected a heavy insurance upon his life should meet with a fatal accident so soon afterwards.

"We are not the only office likely to suffer," Hallowes went on. "Between ourselves, several of the smaller companies have been rather hard hit, for it turns out that Mr. Mortimer Howard had taken out policies—accident and otherwise—in every direction. Most of the other offices have paid up already and tried to look pleasant over it, but our directors are inclined to kick."

"On what grounds?"

"Well, we have been looking into matters a bit, and making careful inquiries on our own account. This Mr. Howard, you must understand, had the reputation of being wealthy, which, at first sight, seems to be borne out by actual facts. But there are ugly rumours afloat as to money-lender's claims, gambling debts, and goodness knows what. It is said that he was given to dabbling in stocks and shares, and with outside brokers too. You know what leeches they are. When once a man gets into their hands, you may be sure they will drain him pretty dry before they are done with him."

"You think, then——?" I began.

"I think nothing," Hallowes hastened to interpose. "I have no facts to go upon yet. The whole circumstances of the case, however, justify our people in holding back payment for the present, until the matter is thoroughly sifted."

"There were two others with Mr. Howard at the time, I understand. Do you know who they were?"

"One was a relative of his, a certain Mr. Henshaw, who had been staying with him for some time past. This Henshaw is an American, or at least he has spent a good many years out there, quite long enough to pick up all the Yankee ways. It was from him we got an account of the accident. He states that they were making for a point some distance below Lidford, for the tide was running out like a mill-race at the time, and they found that they could make little headway against it. Just as they were within a stone's-throw of the shore, the other man, a young fellow called Goddard, jumped up to take a shot at something overhead. In doing so he lost his balance and upset the boat. Henshaw and Goddard, as you may have heard, saved

"Adventures of an Actress" begin to-day.

Digitized by Google

themselves by clinging on to the keel. When they succeeded in righting the boat, which they did with very great difficulty, Howard had disappeared. The only trace they could find of him was his hat, which was drifting down with the tide."

"And this man Goddard?" I asked.

"Ah, that's exactly where the rub comes in," replied Hallowes. "If there is any trickery in this business, I could well understand that Howard and Henshaw were acting in collusion. But with Goddard the case is entirely different. It seems that he was quite a casual acquaintance of theirs. He came to Lidford a few weeks before as a total stranger, and put up at one of the smaller hotels. Being fond of sport, he spent most of his time prowling about the flats with his gun. It was there the other two first ran across him. They got into conversation with him and took him in tow for the rest of the day. It was arranged that he should accompany them on the afternoon in question, and he confirms Henshaw's story as to what happened on the way back in every particular. Altogether, I foresee that Goddard is the rock upon which our case will spit."

"And what steps do you propose to take?"

"The directors have put the whole thing into my hands. I am to go down and look into the matter carefully on the spot. Now, as I have never tackled an investigation of this kind before, I feel I might possibly miss some little vital point, which anyone with more experience would see the importance of and pounce upon at once. That's what brought me to you. If you could accompany me——"

"I'm your man," I said, cutting him short, for a nice little problem of this kind didn't often come my way.

"You see," he continued, "it's a rare chance for me, and I want to make the most of it. Our people wouldn't mind stumping up in the least if all was plain and straight sailing. It's the thought of being possibly swindled that sticks in them. And if it should really prove to be a case of fraud, and I prevent them from being fleeced of these few thousands, they'd think more of it than if I saved them three times the amount in any other way."

Early next morning we set out for Lidford together, and arrived there late in the afternoon.

Our first step was to seek an interview with Henshaw, who, it appears, was one of Mr. Howard's executors, and

I stepped forward quickly, plucked the hat from his head, and sent it skimming out into the water.

Tell your best friends about our new series.

Digitized by Google

as such had been entrusted with the winding-up of the estate.

We found him an uncommonly hard nut to crack.

A shrewd, wide-awake Yankee, he was not at all the kind of man to make a slip or to give himself away. He seemed to take it quite as a matter of course that the insurance company should wish to satisfy themselves on all points, but evidently regarded it as a foregone conclusion that they would have to pay out in the end.

Though ready enough to answer any questions put to him, he stopped short at that. He did not appear to consider that he was called upon to volunteer any information of his own accord. It was for us to find out all the particulars we wished to know; his part was merely to reply to our inquiries. That was the attitude he took.

At Hallowes' request he accompanied us down the Strand, and pointed out the exact spot where the accident had occurred. The tide was on the ebb at the time. In near the shore the water was very deep and sluggish, but a little further out I could see that the current was exceptionally powerful. It raced past us with the speed of a galloping horse.

"A strong tide, that," remarked Hallowes, as we stood looking out over the broad river.

"You might well say so," Henshaw returned, in his dry way, "if you were pitched head-foremost into it."

"You had not reached the slack water, then, when the accident happened?" I put in.

"Not quite," he replied. "Almost, but not quite."

"And you saw nothing of Mr. Howard after the boat was upset?"

"Not a trace."

"The body was never recovered, I believe?"

"It was not," he admitted.

"But you had the river dragged, hadn't you?" I asked.

"For days," he answered.

"With no success?"

"None."

I was silent for a moment; and then tackled him again on the same point.

"How do you account for that?" I asked.

For answer he simply raised his hand and pointed with his fore-finger towards the rushing, foaming current.

"If you were dropped in there, my friend," he said, turning to me in rather a grim manner, "with such a tide as that running at the time, the best place to look for you next morning would be a dozen miles or so out to sea."

This seemed reasonable, although I did not at all like his way of putting it. Still, there was one other point.

"And the hat?" I asked.

"The hat," he replied, selecting a cigar from his case and coolly nipping off the end with his teeth, "was tossed out of the current a little lower down."

"Would you mind pointing out the exact point?"

He looked as if he thought he had had quite enough of this cross-examination; but still he complied.

We strolled along until we came to a big round boulder close to the water's edge, on reaching which Henshaw paused and proceeded to light his cigar in a very leisurely manner.

"There," he said, as he jerked the stump of the match into the water, "we found the hat floating down there, not twenty yards from where we're standing at the moment."

I had my eyes on him at the time, and, slight as it was, I saw him give a palpable start. A very odd look came into his face for a moment; he took the cigar from his mouth, whisked right round, and glanced up at the sky.

"I guess," he said, "it looks like rain, gentleman. If you've no more questions to ask, I think I'll be getting back."

"Yes, it certainly does seem as if we were in for a smart shower," replied Hallowes, cocking his eye towards the sky, and utterly thrown off the scent by the cuteness of the Yankee.

But, clever as he was, our friend Henshaw hadn't taken me in quite so easily.

"Oh, no, my fine sir," I said to myself, "it isn't the thought of rain that troubles you. That's not what made you start just now. You're playing a deep game; but like many another in your place you've made some little mistake and suddenly become aware of it in the last minute or so."

Though now thoroughly convinced that there was trickery at the bottom of Mr. Mortimer Howard's disappearance, I didn't want Henshaw to see that I suspected anything of the kind, and so turned away from the spot with the most careless and most indifferent air I could assume.

But my mind was hard at work as we strolled back along the beach. I felt that I was on the brink of some startling and amazing discovery.

It was with the greatest reluctance that I moved away. Something seemed to be dragging me back to that boulder.

What had made Henshaw start as we stood there together? What had been revealed to him, which was as yet hidden from us?

My two companions were now chatting in the most friendly manner, and Henshaw seemed to have lost all apprehensions regarding the rain. As for me, I was chafing inwardly, fuming with impatience to return to that spot alone. At last I could stand it no longer; and trumping up some excuse about having to write an important letter, I told Hallowes that I would hurry on ahead.

"Oh, hold hard!" he cried out, as he saw me start off. "There's no great hurry. You'll have plenty of time when we get back."

The blind dolt! I could have punched his head. But I took no notice of his bawling and hurried away, until I got round a corner out of sight. The moment I did so I scrambled up the bank to the high ground above, and bending low down so that the two others should not catch a glimpse of me, doubled back for all I was worth.

When I reached the boulder, I sat down on the beach close to it, took my head in my hands, and did some hard thinking. I went over the whole ground again, weighed every point, tried to put myself in Henshaw's place and to imagine what had caused him to start in that manner. That it had something to do with the hat I felt convinced. But what?

Beautiful Hazel Harlow will interest you deeply.

Digitized by Google

For the best part of an hour I suppose I sat there racking my brains. But nothing came of it. I was baffled!

Very sore at finding myself foiled in this manner, I felt the necessity of relieving my feelings in some way. Stretching out my hand I picked up a splinter of wood which was lying beside me.

"Dash it!" I muttered, with pure vexation, and I hurled the splinter into the water as if I had a personal grudge against the river and all belonging to it.

My eyes followed the piece of wood as it fell upon the surface, and drifted slowly away.

And then—and then—well, the next second I had bounded to my feet with a regular whoop of triumph. I had made a most singular, a most interesting discovery. Oh, yes, I saw it all now! I knew why Henshaw had started when he chucked the stump of his match into the water!

I hurried back to our hotel, where I found Hallowes hunting high and low for me.

"Where on earth have you been?" he asked as I entered.

"Never mind now," I answered. "We've got something else to think of. You must contrive to cajole our friend Henshaw into accompanying us to the same spot to-morrow afternoon."

"Do you think we are likely to get anything more out of him?"

"I shouldn't be surprised."

When Hallowes approached him next day, however, Henshaw's mood had quite changed. He had turned uncommonly rusty since we last saw him.

He was inclined to bluster a bit, said that he had no time to waste in fooling around in this way; but as he couldn't very well get out of it, he came along with us in the end.

On reaching the boulder I let Hallowes smooth him down a bit by putting a few trivial and unimportant questions, and then quietly chipped in myself.

"By the way, Mr. Henshaw," I said, "I understood you to say it was just here you picked up the hat?"

"Yes, right here," he returned.

"And it was floating down with the tide, wasn't it?"

He shot a keen, searching glance at me, but I bore it well.

"Yes," he answered, boldly.

I stepped forward quickly, plucked the hat from his head, and sent it skimming out into the water.

"Look!" I cried, pointing to it as it settled on the surface and began to drift away—not *down* the stream but *up*.

He did look; and his jaw dropped. One glance was enough to show him that the game was up. With a fierce oath he turned upon me and his hand went like a flash towards his hip pocket. But I was too quick for him, and let him have my fist between the eyes before he could draw his six-shooter. As he went down I sprang upon him and soon had him unarmed.

All this time Hallowes stood stock still, gazing stupidly at the hat as if he could scarcely believe his eyes.

"What—what does it mean?" he gasped, when I had finished with Henshaw.

"Why," I said, "the explanation of it is simple enough. Just here, as is often the case in tidal rivers, there is a strong counter current close to the shore, so that things drift in the opposite directions to which the tide is running at the time. Our friend here became aware of this interesting fact when he threw the stump of a match into the water yesterday. A little later on I discovered it by pure accident in much the same way."

* * * * *

Well, as I had suspected from the moment I laid eyes on Henshaw, the whole thing turned out to be a very clever attempt at fraud. Mr. Mortimer Howard was no more dead than Henshaw himself or any of the rest of us.

It came out afterwards that he was miles away at the time the boat was supposed to be upset.

It appears that, finding himself heavily involved, and knowing that a crash was bound to come sooner or later, he made known the state of the case to the wily Henshaw.

The latter immediately suggested that he should disappear in some manner which would afford strong presumptive evidence of his having met with a fatal accident.

Then, when the insurance money had been raked in, he could start afresh in some other part of the world. Between them they hit upon the idea of a bogus boating accident. But there was one little drawback. They wanted an independent witness, and didn't know exactly where to find one.

Chance very soon threw the very man in their way. One day, when they were out shooting together, they ran across Goddard.

This young gentleman was a sporting character, who had lost pretty heavily on the turf, and got himself into a bit of a pickle in consequence. Henshaw had known him in former years, and had some sort of hold over him.

But apart from that, Goddard was quite ready to assist them in their plans if he could fill his pockets by doing so.

Fifty pounds down, with the promise of a few hundred when the insurance money was all paid, squared him quickly enough.

When they rowed across the river that afternoon, on pretence of going duck-shooting, the missing man was landed on the opposite shore. It was arranged that he should make his way to the nearest seaport in disguise, embark for America, and lie low there until Henshaw joined him with the insurance money.

The two others waited about till the evening and then rowed back, with Howard's hat lying in the bottom of the boat. The rest was easy enough to manage.

Henshaw, even though he had given himself away when he tried to draw upon me, did his best to brazen the thing out afterwards. When he was arrested, he was full of bluff and bluster, and kept up the farce right to the end.

Goddard, however, who was laid by the heels in a different part of the country, proved to be a very poor-spirited sort of individual, and caved in at once. He wasn't an hour in custody before he had disclosed the whole plot!

Detectives were sent out to the States, and Mr. Mortimer Howard was eventually landed once more in his native land. The whole three subsequently met with their deserts at the hands of a judge and jury.

Digitized by Google

IN SOUTH AFRICA.

A True Story of the War.

THERE was a pit-a-pat of footsteps outside the ramshackle farmhouse. A child flung himself through the open door, sank into a chair, and began to beat his little fists upon the clothless table in an ecstasy of fear.

"The yellow men, granny, the yellow men," he wailed. "I have looked through the long glass, and I have seen them all coming, thousands and thousands of them, and they will kill us all, and burn the house. Jan's farm by the river is all burning; and the yellow men have crossed the water. Oh, granny what shall we do?"

And the boy's voice died away in a falsetto shriek.

It was a square, bare room, rather large, but very low ceilinged. The tattered blinds were drawn down, to keep out the fierce glare of the South African sun, and the atmosphere in the room was very heavy and hard to breathe.

On a hard, shiny surfaced sofa, of the sort common in poor houses in London, lay another child, half covered with a rug. Her cheeks were wofully drawn, and she was obviously in a state of high fever. An old woman with a hungry face sat motionless by the side of the little girl and stared across the room at the wailing boy. In her hand was a Bible, kept open by a bony finger between the leaves, and the book was open at the story of the rout of the Philistines by Joshua.

For a month, save for a visit of the mercenaries, the old woman in the tumble-down farm had been quite cut off from the outside world. All the men had long since gone from the district, and the rumours of the oncoming English, whom report credited with killing all they found, had sent those women and children who stayed behind flying to the east.

But the old woman had nowhere to fly to. Her only son was fighting; she had no friends or relations, and there was nothing to do but to wait on with the children and trust blindly to Providence.

In the morning there had been loud firing not far from the house, and dull firing that seemed to come from miles away. Then, about midday, the nearer firing had ceased, and presently a great rust-bitten gun, its snout jerking spasmodically heavenwards as it lumbered behind a team of oxen, had been dragged past.

All through the afternoon unkempt, haggard men had hurried past on stumbling ponies, and hour after hour the old woman had watched the flying army, praising Heaven, as band after band disappeared over the edge of the hill, that they did not stop to take the few morsels of biscuit that were left for the children.

For the last hour or two there had been no more fugitives, and the old woman had gone back to sit with her bible by the dying child.

She was not quite sure of what was likely to happen till the boy had run in with the news of the yellow men's approach, but she felt quite certain that somewhere in the region of the firing had been her son.

It never crossed her mind that he might have been in this particular fight. All that she knew of war she had got from her bible, and as in those days one nation had always gone up against another, so now she imagined that the present fighting was being conducted on the same lines.

So she was racked with doubt as the ragged army of burghers trailed past the farm. Would not her son, if he had been flying among them, have stopped and sought shelter with her?

There was the cellar dug out beneath the living room, and he knew of that, for had he not dug it out himself? Or would he have been compelled to rush on with the others to fight again somewhere else?

The old woman could not conceive that that was possible, for her bible knowledge of fighting told her that when one side was made to fly all was over with that side, and it was best to hide, for the conquerors had set themselves to the killing of the conquered. It must be, then, that he was wounded or perhaps dead

"Adventures of an Actress" begin to-day.

Digitized by Google

somewhere, where the cannons had been firing all day. She decided that presently she would go out and look for him. She would take with her the little bottle of gin that had been saved after the party given to the field cornet.

The little boy at the table wailed on, and the hungry old woman felt the burning fingers of the fever-stricken little girl on her wrists. She could not bring herself to feel much sympathy for the children, for her heart was all with her son, who was fighting, and after all, she had given them the biscuits and gone hungry herself.

There was no noise outside now, save the industrious hum of the bees. She held her hand to ear, hoping against hope that she would not hear the oncoming of the victorious army. At last she made out the sound of a horse's hoofs—one horse only it seemed. They came nearer quickly, and then the figure of a mounted man rushed into the view that the open door commanded.

She saw the man scramble from his steaming horse and strike it heavily with the butt of his rifle, so that it flung up its head and galloped away. Then he staggered in through the door, wiping the dust from his eyes with his ragged sleeve.

"My son my son!" screamed the old woman tottering to her feet. "Oh, I was sure you would come; I was sure of it."

The man stopped her speech with a gesture.

"Quick, the crowbar," he whispered hoarsely. "I must get down into the cellar; they're close after me, mother, very close."

He snached the heavy bar that she had brought laboriously from a corner, and began to prise the thin end into a broad crevice at the side of the hearthstone.

"Keep the children quiet," he muttered, elbowing away the excited little boy at his coat tails; "if they catch me, mother, it's certain death—certain death."

When the stone had been raised a few inches it turned back easily on hinges, and he scrambled down a ladder.

"Remember, mother, it's death if I'm found; push the table over the trap, sit by it, and keep the children's mouths closed."

Then he disappeared.

The table was only just pushed into place in time. The old woman sat down by it and took up her Bible again. She stared vacantly at the troopers in dirty khaki who stalked into the room.

"The yellow men, the yellow men!" screamed the little boy, running behind the shelter of the table.

The manner of the sergeant was sharp and harsh.

"Now, then, old woman, you've got a man hiding here; it's no use lying; we saw him come in. Out with him."

He spoke in excellent Dutch; he was, in fact, a Volunteer from the Cape, and owned a grandfather who hailed from Amsterdam.

"There is no one here, sir," she answered quietly; "no one here but myself and the children, and one of them, you see, is very ill; and you would not wish to make her worse, surely?"

The man's voice softened a little.

"Of course not, my good woman; but you've a man hiding here who fired under a white flag, and we've got to have him. Search the house, men, as quietly as you can."

The sergeant sat down nursing an arm that was roughly strapped to him with a piece sacking. As his eye roved round the room he noticed the boy, and stared at him curiously, as if trying to recall some memory.

The search did not last long. The men were colonials who knew the ways of the country, and the fissure at the side of the hearthstone was soon noted.

"He's down there, sergeant," said a young man pointing with the but of his Lee-Enfield beneath the table: "we'll have to be careful, though; he'll be armed."

There was a parley of ten minutes, while the nozzles of half a dozen rifles were poked into the aperture beneath the slightly raised hearthstone.

At last an unseen hand thrust out a Mauser, and in another moment the Boer stood before them.

"Why, it's you, Williams, is it?" he said in hesitating English, staring at the sergeant. "If I'd known I wouldn't have fired."

"Why, who are you?" The sergeant's eyes were puzzled, and he faltered.

Then the little boy ran from behind the table and gripped his father's knee.

"You won't kill my father, I know," he said, pleadingly, and at the voice the sergeant turned pale. "Nelly's voice and Nelly's eyes!" he murmured.

"Yes, and Nelly's boy," said the Boer. "I'm your brother-in-law, Williams, and I wouldn't have fired on you if I'd known, as I say. Your sister's dead, you know."

Then the sergeant's men displayed a tact that was hardly to be expected from mere troopers. They made hurriedly for the door, and in a moment the sergeant was alone with his relations.

* * * * *

"I hope that you will agree with me that I did right, boys," said the sergeant fastening the Mauser that he had taken from his brother-in-law across the saddle bow. "After all, 'twas me that he hit, and the kiddies are my own sister's kiddies. Besides I don't believe that he quite knew what he was doing. I've given 'em that tin of bully beef I had. They were nigh starving; d'you mind that?"

As an answer the troopers swung into their saddles, and in five minutes the little band had disappeared over the crest of the hill.

THE MOST HUMOUROUS BOOK OF RECENT TIMES.

THE NEW MASTER.

By Arnold Golsworthy.

Author of "Hands in the Darkness." Crown 8vo. cloth, price 3s. 6d. With numerous illustrations by TOM BROWNE.

"Mr. Golsworthy is a born humourist. This book is brimful of fun . . . it shows so keen an insight into boy nature, and so much genuine humour, that it ought to commend itself to those who are capable of enjoying a healthy laugh."—*Glasgow Herald.*

AT ALL BOOKSELLERS, BOOKSTALLS & LIBRARIES.

Tell your best friends about our new series.

Digitized by Google

THE DIAMOND SERPENT.

THE ordeal was over.

He had proposed, and she had said "yes," and now she nestled against his heart folded in his strong arms, looking into his eyes with a face radiant with happiness.

"You think you will never regret this day, Hortense?" he asked softly, "you know that I am credited with possessing a brute of a temper, dearie; I know myself that it is short, that I am stern determined and unrelenting, though it is so, believe me, only when wrong has been done me or mine."

She said she never should regret that day, and catching his face between her small hands looked right into his eyes.

"Your temper, my Louis, shall never be aroused by me," she went on. "I believe it is strong; an outburst would scare me almost to death."

"Poor little girl," he said, "I am afraid of it myself sometimes. But I will keep a strong hand on it, for your sake."

They kissed again, and then she kissed with joy and many times the diamond band he had just placed on her finger.

"You love diamonds," he remarked, watching her.

"Not more than I love you, Louis," colouring deeply. "It is not because they are diamonds that I hug them to me, but because you gave me this ring, because it means so much to us. I suppose every woman likes diamonds, all jewels in fact, more or less, and after all, diamonds are so beautiful it would seem strange if they did not. And they make woman look still more beautiful herself, don't you think so, Louis?"

He did; and she sighed.

"Now, look at Mrs. Gordon West," she continued, "I don't think she would be half so fascinating stripped of her diamonds—and particularly of her diamond serpent—that lovely brooch! I almost envy her for that alone."

"I did not know she was at all fascinating either with or without her jewels," Louis said.

"You never thought so, once? Why, do you know, people said, and maybe are saying now, they were certain you were in love with her. They have told me so and I——"

He held her more tightly in his arms.

"People say many silly things," he answered; "I should no more dream of marrying Mrs. Gordon West, than flying to the moon. She is rich, she may be good-looking, from the world's point of view it might have been a splendid match for me. I have been told so; but then, I am not absolutely poverty-stricken, and beyond, well, I just simply loved you."

Hortense sighed contentedly, as only a woman sighs when she is perfectly happy. She felt a great pity in her heart for Mrs. Gordon West, who had even confided to her her admiration for the rising young Doctor Louis Kellner, together with all her hopes and aspirations.

* * * * *

The news of the engagement between Louis Kellner and Hortense Maydew travelled quickly, and Mrs. Gordon West was among the first to learn it. How she deported herself in the privacy of her boudoir is a secret well-guarded from the world at large. Certainly no effects were apparent when she appeared in her box at the Opera in the evening. Youthful and radiantly happy as ever she looked, and the extra brilliancy of her eyes almost counterbalanced the absence of the famous serpent brooch from her breast.

"I hope she will be happy," she confided to her dear friend, Mrs. Ethel Graveson. "She ought to be, it's a brilliant match for her. They are very poor, you know, the Maydews and she had nothing but a lengthy lineage to recommend her."

"Some think her beautiful," Mrs. Graveson remarked.

"Yes," the other drawled. "Personally I, too, am with them, and I can only suppose it is for that Mr. Kellner is marrying her."

"Yet he has told me that he looks beyond the skin for qualities in a woman."

"Few men look so far when they fall in love," said Mrs. Gordon West. "But I am afraid she won't be all so happy as I would wish every married couple to be," she continued, "he is young, clever, handsome, by no means poor, but——"

"You would say he has a temper?"

"Just so. At least, I have heard so, how the report originated though I don't know. Still, looking at his face in repose he is hard and cruel, and determined. In his wrath he must be terrible to encounter."

"And yet I heard you were—well not impartial to him."

Mrs. Gordon West laughed lightly.

"It is strange how these reports gain ground," she remarked.

* * * * *

"A diamond serpent brooch?" said the shopman. "Certainly, we can make it and to any price you like. Something like this £250, or this £5. I need not explain thereon, or difference in value."

Louis Kellner chose the £250 article.

"It will take some time to make," the man explained.

"Ah, that is sold?"

"Well, it belongs to Mrs. Gordon West, she sent it to have a facsimile made in paste. This is the facsimile,"

The doctor took them and examined the pair curiously.

"Well, one could hardly tell the real from the unreal," he remarked, handing them back. "By the bye, the tail here turns down from the head; in mine you will make it turn up."

* * * * *

Wentworth House was a blaze of light and life. All fashionable London was there, for not to be in town and not recorded in the newspaper chatter as being amongst the guests of Mrs. Gordon West's functions was to be indeed counted out of society.

This was one of the balls of the season and naturally amongst those invited were Hortense Maydew and Dr. Kellner.

Beautiful Hazel Harlow will interest you deeply.

Digitized by Google

The Doctor was to have called for his *fiancée* and take her on to the dance, but as the time passed and he came not, Hortense set out alone with her Aunt.

"I suppose," she said with a sigh of regret, "some unexpected professional call has detained him."

She was however, mistaken in her surmise, Louis Kellner had failed to keep the appointment for quite a different reason.

This was the day for which the diamond brooch had been faithfully promised. It had not however, been delivered in the afternoon; and the Doctor's servant calling at the jewellers to learn the cause of the delay was informed that the diamond setter especially engaged on this piece of work, had at the eleventh hour, been taken suddenly ill. But another workman was now busy on the brooch, and it would certainly be ready in the evening.

The Doctor was annoyed. He had particularly set his heart upon presenting the brooch to Hortense to wear at the ball that night, and as the time sped by beyond the hour for which it was promised and approached the moment when he should set out to call for Hortense, he grew the more impatient.

And it was not till well past the moment that the messenger arrived with it, to incur in the final few seconds the righteous wrath of the doctor, which was however, delivered at the firm and not the individual.

Consequently he arrived late at Wentworth House—a full half hour after the dancing had begun, and it was not until they were sitting out the sixth dance that he had an opportunity of explaining to Hortense the reason of the delay and pinning the diamond serpent in the neck of her dress.

They were in the conservatory at the time, and the plashing of the fountain mingled with the sweet softness of the music from the ball-room, combined to increase the delight and happiness of Hortense engendered by the unexpected gift of so beautiful a present.

She thanked her lover with a kiss, and he drew her head on to his shoulder.

As he did so his eye caught sight of the glitter of something in the dark coils of her coiffure, but he concluded that it came from a deftly hidden comb and therefore remarked not thereon.

It was just as they had risen to return to the ball-room that Mrs. Graveson approached them. She was agitated and flushed with excitement.

"What do you think has happened?" she asked breathlessly. "Mrs. Gordon West has lost her diamond

With a cry of mingled rage and pain she sank on the seat.

Oblige the Editor by passing "Short Stories" on to somebody else.

brooch—the famous serpent you know. She forgot to pin it in when she came down and left it on the table in her boudoir. She tells me she saw it there when you went up to her Miss Maydew, and since you came down together it has disappeared. Her maid declares that no one has since entered the room."

Hortense clutched at the brooch at her throat and went deadly pale.

"This," she said, "is a present from Louis, from Dr. Kellner," she exclaimed; "he has just given it to me," for Mrs. Graveson was regarding the brooch with suspicion.

"Has Mrs. West told anyone but you of her loss?" the Doctor asked coolly, speaking to Mrs. Graveson.

"Yes, she is very much upset. You know how impetuous she is. Of course, all her guests are alert and suspicious, but she has communicated with the police."

"Ask her quietly to come to me," the Doctor said, "if you will be so kind."

Mrs. Graveson went in search of her hostess, and the Doctor turned to his *fiancée*.

"Tell me why you went to Mrs. West's boudoir," he said.

"It was her wish. She did not come down until many of the guests had arrived. She had a headache and wished particularly for my salts—the ones you make me up, you know. And——"

"While you were sitting there, she said your hair was slightly disarranged, and rose to restore it?" Doctor Kellner continued.

The girl was agitated.

'Good heavens! How do you know that? You were not here!"

"Just bend your head a moment, dear."

She did so and the Doctor put his fingers into the coils of her hair. As she raised her eyes Mrs. West entered the conservatory.

She was full of her loss, and in a temper. She examined the brooch the Doctor had just given Hortense and in her first breath declared it was hers, but when he pointed out that the serpent's tail twisted up from the head she was satisfied.

"But how did you know the tail of my brooch turned the other way?" she inquired.

"I have observed it very closely," the Doctor answered, "on occasions when it has bedecked your throat. I am sincerely sorry at your loss," he went on, "I understand you have communicated with the police. What do you propose to do? Is there anyone amongst your guests whom you suspect?"

Mrs. Gordon West refused to say.

"But no doubt everyone would rather you did," he asserted.

"They would all be willing to be searched." There was a ring of sarcasm in his voice.

"That is impossible," Mrs. Gorden West exclaimed. "I could not ask them."

"If you will permit me I will suggest it," he continued, "that is, if you think it necessary."

Mrs Gordon West trembled and hesitated.

"Still," he pursued, "I do not think it will be necessary. Miss Maydew was the last person with you in your boudoir she informs me, and you can I suppose rely upon the word of your maid that since you left no one has entered?"

"Implicitly."

"Then it remains only for Miss Maydew to be searched," his lips were tightly pressed and his eyes blazed.

"It shall be done in that ball room if you prefer, or here. Still, ere we submit her to this degradation let me ask you to search first and make sure you have lost your brooch; let me suggest that you search first in your coiffure there," and he touched her hair with his hand.

Her hand flew to her head. The pin or diamond brooch scratched her fingers, and with a cry of mingled rage and pain she sank on the seat, with the brooch in her hand, her face deathly white.

"If you had lost it, it would not have mattered much, since the gems are but paste. You were not sure enough even of so foolish and so dastardly a trick coming out as you would have desired it, to trust your real gems for a few moments in my *fiancée's* coiffure. They might have been lost, eh?" and he laughed bitterly.

Hortense clung to his arm and stared at Mrs. Gordon West in amazement.

"Into the motive of this thing it is unnecessary to go here," he said, "only you in your heart know why you would have publicly degraded my affianced wife."

Mrs. Gordon West gasped and clutched his hand.

"You will not?" she breathed with a great fear in her eyes.

He shook off her hold, wiped his hand with his handkerchief and passed into the ball-room.

And the guests were relieved to learn that their hostess had found her brooch, had never lost it in fact.

KALI, THE GODDESS OF DEATH.

By TRISTAM K. MONKE.

The little hill village of Begra, as everyone is aware, is a small military station midway between Naince Tol, in the Oude, and Khatmandoo in the Nepaul.

It was there I met Cyril Vere, a captain in the Punjaub Infantry, and with him, undertook one of the rashest expeditions it has ever been my fortune to enter upon.

Tall, handsome almost to beauty, Cyril Vere was counted a lucky man in Begra, where his good looks, wealth, the possession of a simple iron cross "for valour" and his rich baritone voice, carried the day with the European ladies.

"Tristam," he exclaimed one evening, as he and I sat together in his bungalow, "I have decided to go on a somewhat peculiar expedition—care to come?"

"Tigers?" I queried tentatively.

"No!" he replied laughing, selecting a Havana from a box which lay open beside him, on the table. "I'm sick to death of the brutes. The mess dared me to-night to do what I am about to undertake, and frankly Tris, I should be obliged for your help in this business."

"And what is it?"

"Didn't you hear what Chrichton said. Oh, of course, you were not at mess to-night! With the Stavens for tea weren't you, this afternoon? Lucky dog, no

"Adventures of an Actress" begin to-day.

Digitized by Google

wonder you missed our feed. Wish I had the chance," he cried gaily. "Well the fact of the matter is, that I am going to Thum, Mungr, my bahadur is going to guide—"

"Thum?" I echoed. "What the deuce do you want to climb higher up these fiendish Himalayas for."

"Well, you see," he replied merrily, "I've staked five hundred pounds that I shall pay a visit to the Goddess Kali."

"Are you crazy, Cy?" I cried starting from my chair. "Are you aware what your fate will be, if those cursed fanatics catch you in their fane?"

"Kill me as a peace offering to their deity," he replied, cutting the end off his cigar, then he added thoughtfully. "But you see they won't get hold of me."

I paced the room nervously. Knowing Indian affairs better than Cyril did, I was able to appreciate the risk he was about to incur to a nicety.

"I suppose you'll come old man," he remarked tentatively, looking up, "or is the adventure too spicy a one to tempt you?"

"Oh I'm not afraid, if that is what you mean," I replied shortly. "But mind, Cyril, you are an ass to attempt it."

"Thanks awfully! Are you ready?" he queried rising.

"Ready," I echoed, "for what?"

"To see the Divinity!"

"To-night," I gasped. "Are you going to-night?"

"Your perception is excellent," he replied gaily. "Thum is only two thousand feet above the plains, and from here it is only a couple of hours walk. It's nine now, so we ought to get there by midnight—I expect Mungr every moment."

The words had barely left his lips, before the being in question entered and with a low salaam inquired:

"Are the Sahibs ready?"

"Perfectly," replied Cyril, as going to an escritoire he took a revolver from a drawer and examined its charges. "Are you ready?" I nodded surlily; the expedition did not appear very seductive to me.

"Is the Sahib armed?" inquired the Nepaulese servant, addressing me.

"I am," I replied. "You anticipate the necessity of using weapons?"

"I am the Sahib's servant," he replied evasively. "I obey and know nothing."

"Have you a rope?" queried Cyril.

"Yes, Sahib, one of sixty fathoms, and a torch."

"Good," replied my chum; then turning up his collar and striding on to the verandah, was lost in the gloom of the night.

We followed, I soon imitating his example, in turning up my collar.

If Begra was hot in the day, it was, like most hill stations, chilly in the evenings.

For two hours we walked on in silence, till Mungr stopped in front of a large stone temple, almost concealed from view by weeds and low-growing bushes, and, placing his finger to his lips, conjured us not to utter a sound.

"Be as silent as if death had set a seal upon your lips, Sahibs," he whispered impressively. "For ere many minutes have elapsed you will be in the presence of Kali, the destroyer of men!"

He shuddered, bowing low, almost to the ground, as though to propitiate the deity he feared, then cautiously pushing his way with furtive tread through the overhanging shrubs, he reached the portal of the fane.

He paused a second ere attempting to push open the rotting teakwood door, then he flung it from him, the rusty hinges screeching weirdly as the massive portal swung inwards.

We remained stationary in fear, straining our ears to catch any sound which would prove that the hinges had given the alarm of our proximity to the villagers of Thum.

Silence, broken only by the strident cry of a distant night bird, reassuring us on that score, we entered.

Mungr whispered prayers to Buddah between his chattering teeth, as he lighted his torch. Cyril remained grimly silent, whilst I, despite all my endeavours to the contrary, shivered like an aspen.

A mouldy odour, as of an opened tomb, greeted my nostrils as I walked along the gloomy fane, hordes of rats, startled by our advent, scurried across the flagged floor to their holes; then, a silence, awful in its intensity, reigned supreme.

By dint of alternate blowing and coaxing Mungr induced his torch to blaze merrily, my courage returning somewhat when the Nepaulese's brand illumined our surroundings with its lurid glow, dispelling the shadows, and displaying the whitewashed walls of a temple, carved out of a mountain's side for the most part.

"Come, Sahibs," cried the Nepaulese, "follow me, and now may Buddah preserve us!"

We followed him for some distance along the temple, our steps echoing weirdly through the myriad arches of the fane, till our guide stopped in front of a gigantic stone, having a ring on its upper surface, then fixing his spluttering torch in a crack between two flags, cried hoarsely:

"Your help, Sahibs. The stone is heavy."

We lent him a hand, and, raising the flag, saw a yawning aperture before us, impenetrable darkness veiling its profundity.

"This is the hole you told me about, eh, Mungr?—the one leading to the lower temple," exclaimed Cyril, peering into the depths. "There are no steps, you say?"

"No, Sahib, this rope must answer their purpose."

"Go down hand over hand? How jolly. How deep down is it?" Cyril queried, "thirty feet?"

"A hundred and sixty, Sahib. Do not fear, the rope is sixty fathoms; therefore we have twenty feet to the good. Will you descend first to the home of Kali?" queried the Nepaulese, securing one end of the rope to an adjacent pillar.

"Yes," replied Cyril shortly.

Mungr approached him, and tying the rope beneath his armpits, announced that he was ready to lower him into the depths beneath.

Cyril let himself over the edge, and, catching hold of one of the sides of the aperture, cried gaily:

"Say, Tris, old man, wouldn't it be lively for me if I dropped into the arms of an expectant priest, eh? Slack away, Mungr."

Yard by yard the sturdy Nepaulese paid out the rope till the strain on his arm relaxed; then hauling up the rope, he let me down, carrying the torch.

"I will keep guard, Sahib," he whispered, as I dropped over the edge. "Be quick and return ere dawns the day."

I closed my eyes during the descent, till Cyril's cheery voice announced at the same time as did the slackening rope that I was at the end of my journey.

Raising the torch I held high above my head, I was able to note my surroundings.

Tell your best friends about our new series.

We were in a natural cavern, the walls of which were hewn out roughly in the shape of pillars. The rocky ceiling was lost to view in the impenetrable gloom, as was the furtherest end of the cave.

Before us rose a rude rock-hewn altar, from behind which loomed the outline of a gigantic idol, some sixty feet in height.

It was the roughly carved figure of a seated woman, naked to the waist. Its face, revolting in its hideousness, was rendered more repulsive by its protruding fangs being dyed a deep crimson, the brow and cheeks being liberally smeared with red and yellow ochre, as were its abnormally long arms which rested on its knees. A string of small bones and dried lizards depended from its neck, reaching to the breasts of this terrible idol, the nipples of which were represented by sharp steel spikes.

Such was Kali, the Goddess of Death, as seen only by the priests and the victims doomed to be immolated in her honour.

"She is not beautiful," exclaimed Cyril, after surveying the idol for some short while.

"It is a stupendous piece of sculpture," I replied. "But come, let us go back now we've seen it; any moment we may be discovered, and I am not anxious to have Thum about my ears like a hornet's nest."

"Neither do I, my dear boy, only none of the fellows at Begra would believe I'd been in the temple unless I carried off some trophy," he cried gaily; "therefore I mean to sneak a bone or two off her necklace."

"Don't act the fool, Cyril," I retorted irritably; "there is not a man of 'Ours' who would doubt your word, and every moment is precious."

"All right," he replied laughingly; "it's only a thirty-foot climb, and then we'll trot. I shan't be five minutes."

Before I could answer he had approached the gigantic idol and commenced to clamber up. It was a comparatively easy task, the creases in the idol's skirt affording facile footholds; therefore, ere many moments had passed, he stood flushed and excited on one of the hands of the Goddess of Death.

"Rather hot work, that climb!" he cried, mopping his brow with his handkerchief. "But the worst is yet to come; but——"

The sentence for ever remained unfinished. A wild cry of terror, which reverberated throughout the temple, replaced the last word; then the loud rumble of machinery awoke the echoes of the fane.

I glanced upwards in fright to see Cyril in the grip of the idol's hands. Foot by foot he was lifted upwards, struggling frantically to release himself from the figure's retentive grasp.

As a flash of light his fate dawned on me. It must have been the same with him, for a wild, piercing shriek of anguish burst from his lips—a shriek which died away in a palsied moan of bitterest agony as the idol's arms pressed him to its breast, the iron nipple transfixing the wretched man from chest to back.

For a moment it stayed thus; then, the mighty arms relaxing, allowed the mangled form they held to fall with a dull thud to the pavement.

Foot by foot he was lifted upwards, struggling frantically.

Beautiful Hazel Harlow will interest you deeply.

Digitized by Google

Horror-struck by the grim tragedy which had just been enacted, I approached the mutilated form of Cyril to see if he were quite dead. One look at the staring eyeballs, betraying the intensity of his death agony sufficed; then, losing nerve, I let my blazing, resinous torch fall on the body, and fled from the corpse towards the rope I dimly saw in the distance.

A lurid glare lit up the fane, causing me to turn even as I had my hand on the rope.

The brand had set the clothes of Cyril on fire.

I was about to return and extinguish it, when the glare enabled me to discern the outlines of some white-robed priests enter the cavern. A wild yell showed that they had perceived me.

"Pull up, for Heaven's sake, Mungr!" I yelled, emptying the barrels of my revolver amid the oncoming priests.

To my horror the rope remained slack; the running priests were only forty feet away.

Holding my revolver between my teeth, I commenced to climb wildly upwards. Luckily I was a good slack-rope climber, and fear made me shin up the rope quicker than I had ever deemed it possible.

I had fourteen feet start when the first priest reached the rope; with a cry of anger he commenced to climb after me.

Merciful Heaven, shall I ever forget the agony of that hundred and sixty feet climb; my muscles seemed bursting, yet I stuck gamely to it and so did the priest.

In the first sixty feet I gained twenty on the priest; at a hundred he had gained twenty on me. I remember I felt a savage joy possess me as for a single moment I noted that the white vestments of a priest in passing the flaming corpse of Cyril catch fire and blaze merrily. That glance downwards nearly cost me my life; a giddiness seized hold of me, and ere I recovered my self-possession the priest had gained four feet on me.

But eight now separated me from my pursuer.

Nerved by despair I climbed frenziedly upwards; but thirty feet separated me from the top, when I heard the welcome voice of Mungr.

"Climb, Sahib, climb! He gains on you!"

Once more I spurted upwards, my arms almost refusing to bear me.

Ten feet more to safety, and I could hear the hard breathing of the pursuing priest beneath me—could feel his hand touch my heel. What thews and muscles of iron he had.

"Now for it, Sahib!" cried Mungr; "I daren't fire, the report would bring the Thum on us."

Blindly I obeyed him, till I felt his muscular hand seize my collar. "Let go!" he cried commandingly, raising his sabre above his head.

I obeyed him, and as I relaxed my hold, the weapon came down with a ringing thud on the stone, severing the rope in its passage.

A loud shriek burst from the lips of the priest as, clutching the empty air, he fell with a sickening thud on the pavement beneath.

"I was on guard at the door," Mungr said apologetically, as he lifted me into safety; "and only heard the report of firearms. Where is Vere Sahib?"

"Dead," I replied shortly.

"Dead?" he echoed. "Then let us guard the living. Sahib, we must run now for our lives!"

I needed no urging, and together we tore out of the temple through the shrubs, and out on to the mountain road, not a moment too soon either, for Thum had received the alarm, and turned out *en masse* to avenge their desecrated temple.

A shout of triumph greeted our appearance, but having some five hundred yards start, we pegged it like path racers.

They had waited for us at the *further door of the temple*, leaving the one choked up by the bushes totally unguarded. Had it not been for this omission, I should not have been here to-day to tell the tale.

Loading my revolver as I ran, I managed to keep some distance between the pursuing villagers and ourselves, though the pace was killing, as was plainly manifested by Mungr's laboured breathing.

For three quarters of an hour we continued thus, till the roofs of Begra coming into sight in the dim light of dawn, I fired three barrels of my revolver in the air, not daring to lose ground by aiming at the pursuing hordes of infuriated villagers.

The noise of the shooting brought out the little garrison of Begra.

Like madmen Mungr and I tore through the amazed soldiers, I shouting as I ran:

"Fire on that rabble."

In an instant my men fell into line, and received the oncoming villagers with a brisk, well-directed fire, which, cooling their ardour, sent them howling up the mountain towards Thum. Then I fainted away.

The affair nearly provoked a religious revolt, which luckily was suppressed before it came to a head by the ringleaders being hanged.

The British Government censured me for my part in the affair, and not deeming my life safe in India after the little episode, intimated that I had better exchange into a home-coming regiment—which I did.

NOW ON SALE!

Splendid Sixpenny Edition

OF

LOUIS TRACY'S GREAT NOVEL

THE FINAL WAR.

. . *Price Sixpence* . .

"Such a vivid and moving picture of a European War by land and sea, that the interest of the reader is enchained from first to last."—*St. James's Gazette.*

"A story that ought to inspire the dullest British soul with patriotic pride."—*Morning Post.*

At all Booksellers, Bookstalls, and Newsagents, or it will be sent Post Free for 9d. from the

PUBLISHER, 17 HENRIETTA STREET, STRAND, W.C.

Oblige the Editor by passing "Short Stories" on to somebody else.

Digitized by Google

The GOLDEN DWARF

A Sensational Romance of To-Day.

By R. NORMAN SILVER.

Author of "A Keeper of Secrets," "Hate, the Destroyer," "A Daughter of Mystery," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS OF "GOLDEN DWARF."

"It is the body of Sir Christopher Dering!"

The words are spoken by a pretty girl—fair-haired, blue-eyed. She stands, horrified, by a grass-grown ditch in a country lane, out of which a great mastiff is climbing. The ditch contains the corpse of a stalwart man—a handkerchief bound over his mouth and nostrils.

Close to there is a strange figure, graceful, well-dressed, even handsome, but with the stature of a boy and the face of an adult. He carries a heavy dog-whip, and stares, fixedly, at the dead body just discovered by his mastiff, Cerberus.

The girl is Esther Carew; the dwarf, Otto Hare, the richest landowner in Derbyshire, and the mystery of Wyresdale, a village in that county. For the first time in fifteen years he has set foot in a public thoroughfare, to attract the attention of Esther, whom he has watched from his park.

Sir Christopher Dering was alive at seven o'clock the preceding day. He and his nephew, Felix, had quarrelled over the latter's love for Esther. Sir Christopher wanted Felix to make a good marriage—the birth of his little cousin Brian has put him out of the succession to the baronetcy. Felix is faithful to the penniless Esther Carew.

Much turns on the whereabouts of Felix on the night before. It appears that he was in Duchester, some miles off, whither he went on business, and spent a night at the theatre. Could he have killed the squire?

Felix in vain protests his innocence.

But the cloud of suspicion gathers around him. Meantime, the child Brian has been kidnapped, and Felix is suspected of this too. He discovers a riding whip with some peculiar marks upon it.

CHAPTER XVIII. (*continued*).

Amid a mass of jumbled bruises and adherent sand—for the whip had evidently been trodden on and scraped against the gravel—he deciphered some scattered yet electrical words. They ran:

"Expect Get Out of . . . Alive . . . If Not Death is Due to . . ."

There was more, but the astounded reader paused over the fatal hieroglyphic that had checked him. It was battered and dirty, the symbols which followed it indistinguishable. Felix wetted a finger-tip and wiped the surface of the cane. The character must be—yes, it must be 'F.' Horror! he himself was suspected, and his christian name began with that initial. Who else at Wyresdale boasted the fatal letter?

Forester! The Inspector had mentioned Caleb Forester in a grim and suggestive fashion. Felix reeled from the idea—the gentle old man who was Connie's father! It was absurd.

While he wrestled with his thoughts, amazed by the problem set him so suddenly, a servant tapped at the door. Felix acknowledged the summons.

"Please, sir," he was told, "a man would be glad if he might see you a moment—a person of the name of Foley."

Felix Dering gazed at the whip in his hand. "Death is due to 'F.'" spelled its scratched characters. F—Foley; was it a coincidence?

CHAPTER XIX.

"The Child's Face Seems Familiar."

"Ach, my good Keturah, you do not look pleased to see me. And yet I have come a long distance for the purpose of meeting once more the lady who, less than a fortnight ago, had me tracked from London to Derbyshire—by Mr. Neal Garland. So anxious was I not to be disappointed, I would not even let your excellent domestic announce me."

With these words, uttered in a tone as smooth as it was malicious, Dr. Joseph Kraft crossed the threshold of Mrs. Schwartz's parlour and stepped towards its astounded tenant. A yard or so off, he paused and deposited his powerful frame upon a chair opposite the bewildered Keturah's.

Mrs. Schwartz gasped, drew a deep breath and rallied her native courage.

"Drop the sarcastic dodge, Doctor," she advised him and folded her plump arms; "I don't like it and I won't stand it. You had your thumb on poor Carl, but I'm not the mean-spirited foreigner my husband was. I'll own you bluffed Neal the other day, yet we've not spoken our last on that subject. What's brought you here now?"

Joseph Kraft relinquished his limp straw hat and rubbed his soft palms together. Behind his delicate spectacles the German's yellow orbs gazed keenly at the moist red countenance of the lodging-house keeper.

"I will answer the question, Keturah," he said, "if you will imform me why you chose this Garland to be your bloodhound. You are not Mrs. Garland, I presume?"

Keturah Schwartz grinned.

"Perhaps I might be if I wished," she retorted, "but my business is my business. Anyhow, Neal Garland's precious smart and I happened to have him handy when I spotted you at Victoria last week. So I put him on your trail and he ran you to earth fast enough. Old fox that you are, you stalled him off, and as the lad had spent all his cash on the fare, he was obliged to sleep out and nearly had to tramp back to town. He owes you a nice grudge for that, Doctor, does Neal, and he isn't the sort to forget it."

Kraft dismounted his spectacles and polished the lenses—his odd saffron-tinted pupils had the veiled scorn of a cat's.

"Adventures of an Actress" begin to-day.

Digitized by Google

"Mr. Garland," said the German, "is not quite a fool, Keturah, but he bullies—he tried to bully me. I allowed him five minutes to get out or be arrested. He got out. Nevertheless, I bear Mr. Garland no ill-will; I desire, on the contrary, to do him a service. Can you direct me to his—his residence?"

Keturah Schwartz scrutinized the sleek visage of the inquirer.

"You're clever, Joseph Kraft," she replied, "but you can't persuade me you've turned philanthropist. What do you want with Neal?"

Kraft bowed.

"I must reserve that, Keturah," he objected; "for Mr. Garland's ear."

Mrs. Schwartz abandoned her seat—her gross proportions stiffened into decision.

"Then," declared the irate lodging-house keeper, "you can discover his address for yourself—you won't learn it from me."

The German pondered a few seconds and concluded by lifting his loose shoulders.

"Make an appointment with Garland," was his suggestion, "and you shall witness our interview."

Keturah Schwartz moved to the battered bell-pull by the fire-place.

"Glad to see that you can be sensible, occasionally," she said; "on those conditions, Doctor, I will produce him, which isn't difficult, since he digs in my top front suite and owes me a month's rent of it. He's somewhere round I know."

She delivered a husky order to the maid, gained her padded chair and subsided upon its cushions, almost suffocated with the August heat and the burden of her superfluous avoirdupois.

Meanwhile her caller was observing, by a series of quick, shrewd glances, the apartment and its furniture. Nothing escaped his swift perceptions, from the gin-bottle at Mrs. Schwartz's elbow to the grey dust of the cigarette-ash upon the faded carpet.

Suddenly Joseph Kraft's interest was enchained by a little figure that, crouched on the worn hearth-rug beside a tortoiseshell kitten, had intimated its presence with an abrupt outburst of childish tears.

"I want to go home," it wept; "I want to go home to mother!"

The German wrinkled his brows.

"I was not aware we had a witness—of however tender age, to our conversation, Keturah," he said.

Mrs. Schwartz frowned.

"I hate brats," she declared; "but I've had him left on my hands, worse luck!" She flushed athwart the room a gaze of fierce malevolence.

"Jack," she cried; "you remember what I promised you if you were disobedient!"

The boy winced and choked down his sobs.

Kraft smiled—a smile that laid his white teeth bare to the gums.

"Tell me," he said and leant over, his elbows on his knees, "about this famous punishment. Would Mrs. Schwartz do something very terrible to you?"

The child's lip trembled and a tear overflowed the fair lashes.

"She will whip me," came the clear yet terrified response, "till I bleed."

Keturah Schwartz laughed harshly.

"He's right," assented the lodging-housekeeper; "it's the best road with kids; hardens them and warns them to do as they're bid."

Joseph Kraft put his large fingers on the small head and touched the tiny chest and limbs.

"Four years or so," he muttered; "and well-bred—wonderfully well-bred for Pimlico. Strange, the child's face seems familiar."

He sat apparently absorbed by reflection. The creak of the china knob on the door in the rear roused him and he sprang up to twist on his heel and encounter the astonished stare of Neal Garland.

"You are surprised at this visit, Mr. Garland," began the German. "You recollect, no doubt, the nature of our previous, and, hitherto, our only meeting. Tut, people must grow to appreciate one another. You tried to harass me on the strength of a cock-and-bull story told you by the widow of my dead friend, Carl Schwartz. I taught you to respect me; let us consider the incident as closed."

"Curse your long tongue," growled Neal, emboldened by a telegraphic wink from Mrs. Schwartz; "I don't suppose you've hunted me out for nothing. Let's have it plain; I hate soft sawder."

Joseph Kraft adjusted his glasses; the trick delayed his response. "You were at Wyresdale on the evening of Wednesday, July the twenty-third," he said. "I assume Mr. Garland, that, as you went from Wyresdale Park after seeing me, you chanced to observe a certain person, whom, in a moment, I will describe minutely."

Neal Garland settled his lean body on the round table beside Mrs. Schwartz's chair. Neither of them perceived the child, who, still with the kitten clasped to his bosom, had left the hearth-rug and was listening to the German's slow speech.

"I cannot disguise," continued Kraft, in his perfect English, "the importance to certain plans of mine of this person having been noticed by you. It is not a matter for publicity, but an affair of private negotiations. I would, however, rather lose a hundred pounds than hear you say you were not fortunate enough to see the gentleman in question on the evening of the twenty-third of July."

"Go on," urged Neal. "I take you, my noble diplomatist; and the beggar I may have twigged. What was he like?"

"Young," said the German; "tall, grey eyes, brown hair and moustache, dressed in a tweed suit and cap, with tan riding boots. He was mounted on a chestnut horse, and you should have seen him near the cross-roads outside the village of Wyresdale, the night of Sir Christopher Dering's murder."

There was a slight noise—the tortoiseshell kitten had fallen from the relaxed embrace of the child. It arched its back and stretched itself. Mrs. Schwartz, attracted by the event, looked at the boy she had called "Jack." His face was drawn and startled and the baby lips quivered.

With unexpected agility the landlady leapt to her feet, caught up the child and bore him out of the room. On the narrow landing she released him.

"Open your mouth to cry or make a sound of any sort," she whispered; "and I'll burn you all over with a red-hot poker. Stay where you are and don't dare to budge."

She clenched her huge fist, shook it menacingly, and hastened back to the apartment, reluctant to lose a syllable of the conversation between Kraft and Neal. Mrs. Schwartz found herself just in time to behold the transfer of a crisp piece of paper from the German to her lodger.

"I'm on," Neal was remarking; "and this'll do to bind the bargain. But, understand me, Doctor Joseph Kraft, if it theatens to be a police case, I'm off, for reasons of my own."

"For reasons of my own," said the German; "I will not permit it to become any such thing, Mr. Garland. I am obliged to you: your visit to Wyresdale has proved useful, after all." Joseph Kraft reached his hat, clapped it on his straight locks, and bowed to Mrs. Schwartz. "Au revoir, Keturah!" he added; "do not trouble to show me downstairs."

Tell your best friends about our new series.

Digitized by Google

He strode to the door, opened it, saluted again, and closed it. Mrs. Schwartz stole to the keyhole on tip-toe and peered through. The German had paused on the mat beyond and was studying, by the half light, the vague figure of the child. A second he stood thus, then passed down the rickety flight.

Keturah Schwartz spun about; Neal had fallen into her chair and was shaking with merriment. His spare limbs swayed under the extravagance of his laughter, his legs were thrust out helplessly.

"Triple ass!" she cried; "Joseph Kraft's wits would fill a dozen skulls like yours. He came to track the child. Couldn't you see the brat's face when he mentioned its father. He knows it for what it is—Brian Dering."

CHAPTER XX.

Mr. Geddes Is Inquisitive.

"Another crumpet, Mr. Geddes? And do let me give you some fresh tea."

"I cannot disguise the importance of this person having been seen by you."

"Stop, you idiot," cried the stout woman, as she planted her hands on her hips; "stop, or I'll throttle you."

Her lodger struggled for utterance. "The Dutchman thinks—" was Neal's stifled confession, "he—he's bribed me to swear privately that I saw Felix Dering in Wyresdale on the night of his uncle's murder. And all the while I had seen him—oh, isn't it funny? Did you watch how I nodded and smirked and pretended to be acting on his hints like the perjurer he believes me."

Keturah Schwartz smote the table, anger distorting her crimson features.

Archibald Geddes passed his cup to the end of the small table, casting as he did so, a vigilant glance through the particoloured glass of the casement which overlooked the shop. The chemist's assistant sat upon a springless sofa, upholstered with glazed American cloth. To the young Scotchman that gaunt couch was a luxurious divan; it brought him opposite Connie Forester and her tray.

In the further corner of the dark sitting-room behind Caleb Forester's neat pharmacy, a cramped window commanded a strip of cloudless blue. The village of Wyresdale—a picturesque corner of Britain—slept under a glorious

Beautiful Hazel Harlow will interest you deeply.

Digitized by Google

afternoon. But Archibald Geddes would not have exchanged the gloomy apartment where he lounged at his four o'clock meal for all the scenery in Europe.

Connie had donned a new blouse, pink silk and little frills of lace. Her waist was clasped by a band of lizard-skin boasting silver buckles. A ray of sunshine from the shop twinkled on them as she reached a hot muffineer to her companion.

The Scotchman heaved a profound sigh.

"I'm glad you like your belt, Miss Connie," he said, accepting the proffered delicacy, "I'm no judge of such ornaments myself and a gift one doesn't care for is a dismal affair. It's cost me hours wondering what to get you for your birthday."

"I'm sorry for that, Mr. Geddes," intimated Constance Forester crisply, and set the replenished cup by the assistant's plate.

"You needn't be," declared Archibald Geddes, "it was a pleasant occupation—I'm afraid I'll miss it."

Connie smiled, the smile became her brown orbs and mischievous mouth. The Scotchman comtemplated in silence their charming owner.

"I suspect, Miss Connie," he said at length, "you'd be offended if you knew how often I think of you—not that I mean to take a liberty."

"I don't mind, I'm sure," retorted Connie; "it doesn't hurt me."

She rubbed the gleaming buckles at her waist as she spoke, as if to enhance the brightness of the silver.

Archibald Geddes leaned across the table. "I wouldn't have it hurt you," he murmured; "but maybe it's hurt me already, past cure."

Connie picked at the crumbs on the white cloth; the assistant imprisoned her soft fingers.

"I've had a sweet ache in my heart," faltered Geddes, "for many a month now. I'm a fool to run the risk of vexing you, but it seems as if I couldn't hold my tongue. Connie, you're twenty to-day and a woman—a woman any man should be proud to woo whether he won her or not. Connie, I——"

What more Mr. Geddes desired to say must remain a matter of conjecture, since at this precise juncture the door of the sitting-room swung ajar, and a thin voice announced timidly:

"Please, Inspector Brasher would be glad if he might have a word with Miss Forester."

Archibald Geddes started to his feet, muttering a fierce anathema upon the inspector and his desires. But Connie turned a deaf ear to the Scotchman's wrath.

"Ask Mr. Brasher to step in," she ordered the messenger, a shambling, knock-kneed lad, who carried the pharmacy parcels and swept the pharmacy floor. Then she shot a pleading glance towards Geddes.

"I must see him," she whispered; "I—I as good as begged him to keep father out of trouble, if he could, in any of dad's foolish fits. He told me duty was duty, and I snapped him up and left him. But I was certain he'd not hold out long."

Geddes rubbed his chin and coughed. "I suppose," he grumbled, "if Brasher could guarantee to protect Mr. Forester from the legitimate consequences of his confirmed drunkenness, you'd marry him at once?"

Connie stared and then tossed her head. "Well, Mr. Geddes," she cried, "you are polite, both to me and dad. Please understand that you've not the least right to interfere. I wish I hadn't explained now."

The Scotchman would have spoken in his own defence, but Michael Brasher had mounted the steps from the shop and was shaking hands with the indignant Connie. Archibald Geddes nodded to the Inspector and descended grimly to his place at the counter.

Mr. Brasher drummed on the top of his stiff cap and twisted its oil-cloth strap round his wrist.

"I—I beg your pardon, Miss Forester," he stammered, "if I have called at an inconvenient time, but I wanted to drop you a—a hint about your father."

Connie's face grew pale, and she laid a palm on her throbbing bosom.

"I'm going against my own interests," confessed Michael Brasher, "when I recommend you to keep him away from the Wheatsheaf Hotel. He drinks a lot, Miss Forester, and talks of a great service he's done Mr. Felix Dering, and of the trouble his being able to hold his tongue, save the mark, has kept off Mr. Dering."

Constance Forester started and looked down to hide her dismay from the Inspector's shrewd gaze.

"It's wrong of me to mention this, Miss Forester," owned Mr. Brasher; "it's a breach of duty, but even a police-officer has his weaknesses, and you're mine. You weren't over pleased the other morning. Perhaps you'll forgive me now."

The girl shivered to hear the strong passion that vibrated in Michael Brasher's tones. "Thank you very, very much," she said embarrassed. "I don't deserve you to be so kind, Mr. Brasher, and I am ashamed to feel I have made you do wrong."

The Inspector squeezed the delicate fingers held out to him. "It's not worth regretting," he said; "if the worst came to the worst I couldn't help him or you. But in the meanwhile, don't let him challenge our attention—that's all. Good-day, Miss Forester, good-day, I'm your friend—to the best of my power."

And after regarding her tenderly for the space of some seconds, Mr. Brasher departed. He favoured Archibald Geddes with a dignified salute as he strode through the shop and vanished into the High Street.

Hardly had he crossed the threshold than a massive form shadowed the entrance, and, still huge, pink, and amiable, Joseph Kraft appeared.

"A fine afternoon, Mr. Geddes," said the German, blandly.

Mr. Geddes grunted, as though to retort that happiness was not to be estimated by the barometer. Kraft dived into his breast pocket, produced a flat case and touched the hasp. The lid gaped to show a glass barrel, nickel-mounted and possessing a nickel piston. It was the principal portion of a hypodermic syringe.

"I have broken the needle of this little toy," explained Joseph Kraft; "can you replace it or must I send it to town?"

The Scotchman considered the appliance. "It is quite the ordinary type," he said; "I believe so." And he brought a couple of new syringes to experiment on.

As he fitted a needle to the German's instrument, Geddes recollected the enormous purchase of cocaine made by Joseph Kraft some fortnight earlier and recorded in the poison-book at his side. Was it, then, Kraft who consumed the drug by subcutaneous administrations? The Scotchman was seized with desperate curiosity.

Joseph Kraft leant upon the counter, his chin propped, was surveying the completion of his scientific tool. His shirt-cuffs fitted too tightly to permit Geddes that casual but prying glance which might otherwise have revealed on his customer's left fore-arm the tell-tale scars of the needle-point, where it is invariably inserted by the male user.

An idea came to the Scotchman. He allowed his hand, occupied with twisting the screw of the syringe, to slip and hit sharply the starched cuff of the Professor. It shot the linen clear of the wrist and Geddes saw the plump flesh almost to the elbow. The skin was whole and healthful; the German's hypodermic syringe was not for his own

Digitized by Google

behoof. For whose, then?—Kraft had gained, to the persistent brain of the Scotchman, an additional element of mystery.

Geddes apologised, fitted the fresh needle, and received payment. His customer bade him a beaming adieu and strolled out of the shop. In the High Street the German's features underwent a sudden change.

"Deuce take the fellow," he snarled, "that was done on purpose. Mr. Geddes is inquisitive. Henceforth I do not patronise the Wyresdale Pharmacy, I am not sure I was wise ever to patronise it."

Walking at a smart, but awkward pace, Kraft cleared the principal thoroughfare of Wyresdale and soon was in the neighbourhood of the white villa near the cross-roads.

"Otto said five o'clock," muttered the German and glanced at his watch, "I have just timed myself beautifully, there are fifteen minutes for my diplomatic performance, provided the fair maiden is at home. At five o'clock the iron must be hot for the Golden Dwarf to strike. *Donnerwetter*, his latest caprice has caused me sufficient trouble."

Joseph Kraft, thus soliloquising, marched up the Rosery path and rang at the bell in the porch. Barbara, the pretty parlour-maid, answered the summons. The German presented his card.

"My visit is to Miss Carew," he murmured, slipping a florin into Barbara's palm. The maid rejected the gift.

"I will take your card to Miss Carew," said Barbara, curtly, "will you step into the sitting-room, sir." She piloted him to the cool, flower-scented apartment and went away. Kraft pulled at a large red ear.

"Singular," commented the German, "an independent domestic. Doubtless of the faithful servant variety and dangerous."

He beguiled his wait by a tour of the chamber and its surroundings.

"Artistic, but cheap," he decided, "Otto will be a great catch for Mamma Carew. It is Esther we must bend. And," he added, pausing in his stride, "I think I have found the way."

Another inspection of his fine "hunter" interrupted this monologue.

"Miss Esther is tardy," fretted the German. "I should have postponed my call on that impudent Scotch chemist; Otto will be here before the iron is heated."

A slight sound checked his communings, and he advanced to greet Esther herself. She had entered with hesitation, her blue eyes troubled, her colour heightened.

"Dr. Kraft," she faltered; "I—I am afraid I do not remember you."

The German bowed low.

"You see in me a sincere well-wisher, Miss Carew," he said; "yet I own we have not met before. But will you not be seated—I must discharge my errand quickly or it will be too late."

Esther sank upon a lounge, startled and anxious.

"In a few moments," pursued Kraft, standing by her, his huge bulk hugher than ever, "an acquaintance of mine, Mr. Otto Hare, will arrive to seek from you a definite response to his overtures. Pardon my freedom, Miss Carew." He broke off, for the girl had risen proudly. "When I say that I speak for Mr. Felix Dering's advantage I know you will hear me out."

Horrified, Esther Carew fell back in the wide settee.

"Mr. Dering," added Joseph Kraft, "is menaced with a frightful danger. Mr. Hare has secretly obtained proof that on the night of Sir Christopher's murder, his nephew—despite all statements to the contrary—was in Wyresdale. If you were to harden yourself against Mr. Hare's suit I would not take a bad half-crown for Mr. Dering's life."

Esther gazed at the author of this estimate, pallid and tremulous. Kraft glanced from the long French windows of the apartment.

"Heavens!" he cried, theatrically; "Mr. Hare's carriage has stopped at the gate. He must not see me or he will guess that I have been trying to serve his rival. I can escape on to the lawn. Remember, Miss Carew, Felix Dering's fate is in your charge."

The German slipped out of the room by a curtained window as Otto Hare, piloted by Barbara, gained the door. Helpless and unnerved, Esther beheld approach her the tiny form of the Golden Dwarf. Diminutive as it was, she noticed anew its masculine strength and elegance. Otto Hare's black pupils were regarding her with a kind of merciless admiration.

CHAPTER XXI.

A Fresh Card is Played.

"You don't know me, Mr. Dering, and yet I calculate we ought to be better acquainted."

Nicholas Foley lolled in one of the antique chairs that helped to furnish the great library at Dering House. His slouch hat was deposited on the polished floor, his feet were stretched out in their thick boots, his single hand beat a tattoo against his thigh.

Felix Dering had descended from his private room to encounter this remarkable caller, and was gazing with a certain amazement at the uncouth form of the speaker.

"I thought," continued Nicholas, as he groped in a vest-pocket to produce a clay pipe and fill it deftly, "as I've heard such a lot about you, I'd have a look at the cut of your jib. Yours aren't the lines I'd have expected in a buccaneering craft. Blowed if I can fancy the black flag at your fore."

Felix leaned on the tall mantel which bore the Dering escutcheon in carved oak relief. "My good fellew," he said cheerfuliy; "I like the nautical flavour of your talk, but I'm afraid I don't quite follow its purport."

Foley lit his pipe and waved it.

"Don't you try and weather-bow me, my hearty," was his advice; "I'm a better seamen than you any day of the week, and I've got you logged right enough for a darned piratical son of a gun, and if I don't put the King's ships on you—otherwise the police—it's for reasons of my own."

Felix rang the bell.

"You are insolent, Mr. Foley," he said, "and if you have the slightest cause to communicate with the authorities respecting me or my conduct, Inspector Brasher is a shrewd and intelligent officer, and you will find him at the station in Wyresdale High Street. At all events, leave Dering House forthwith."

The sailor rose and moved towards his rebuker. "Serve you right," he hissed, "if I went to this Brasher and told him you was in Wyresdale the evening of the Squire's death. Ay, and offered to prove it, too. But I won't, I'll act fair by my pals, our game's to stand off and on till you come into the shiners, and then we'll have a word to say."

The blood surged up in Felix Dering's veins, and he seized Nicholas's ragged collar.

"You low bully," he cried, "where were you that night? My uncle was killed by a man whose name begins with 'F,' as yours does. Can you prove your innocence?"

Nicholas Foley recoiled and drew his tanned fingers over his brow; a dazed expression had crossed his face—he might have been seeking to recollect something long forgotten. At this crisis the door opened—a servant had entered the apartment.

Foley stepped mechanically to the exit. Once he turned and glanced at Felix Dering. But his braggadocio had deserted him—he walked like a beaten hound. Felix made

"Adventures of an Actress" begin to-day.

Digitized by Google

no attempt to check his visitor's departure, and Nicholas Foley slank out into the corridor.

Dazed by the unconventional interview that had just taken place, Felix went back to his room, his mind filled with momentous, yet incoherent, thoughts. He had seen the change his extraordinary visitor's demeanour had suffered under the reference to that person's whereabouts on the fatal evening which had been full of fatal issues.

In his own chamber Felix took from a cabinet the scratched hunting-crop. He had laid it in security when he was summoned downstairs to his strange caller. Again he pored upon the imperfect lettering, which betrayed so much and yet so little. Slowly he deciphered a few more words. The shattered sentence now read:

"... N't expect get out of ... alive if not ... death is due to F ..... hangs back but ..... oath or death I will nev .... be so vile."

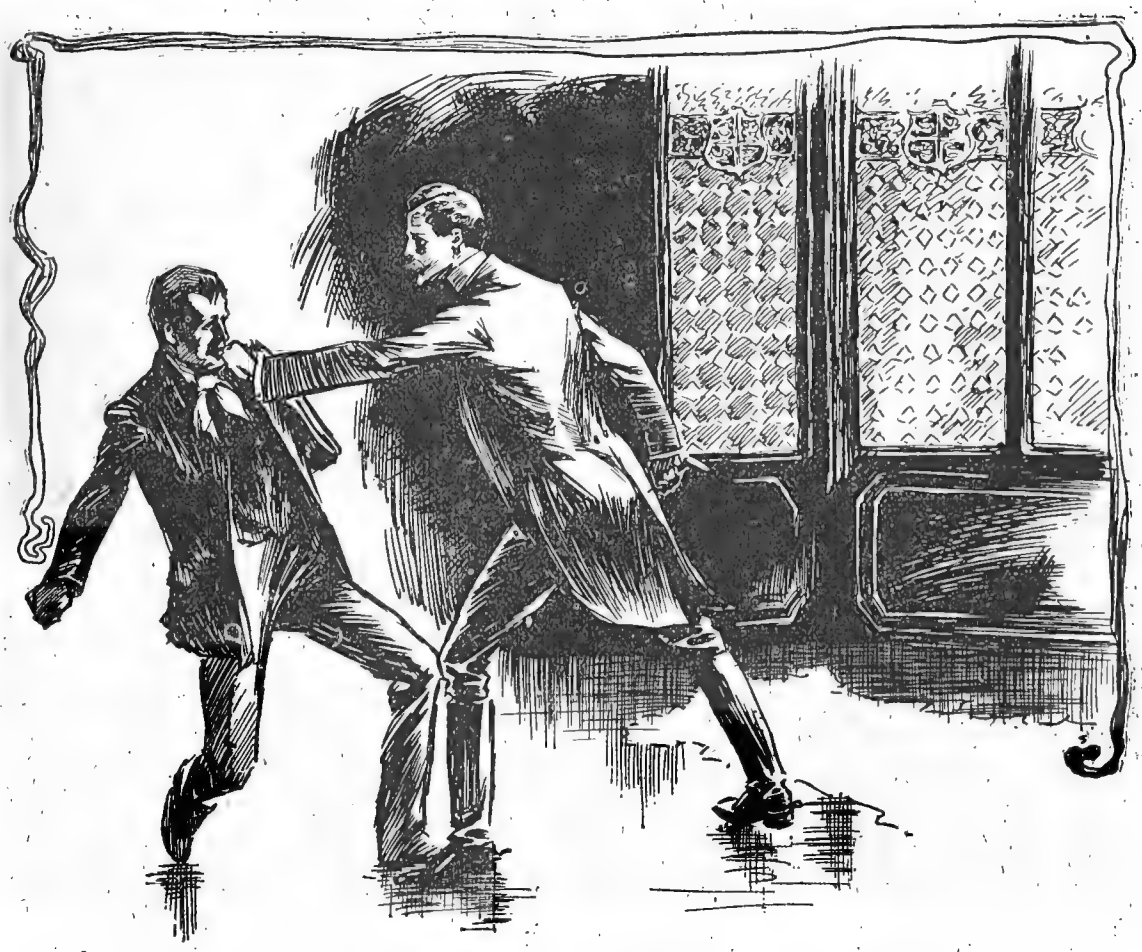
The enigma seemed to deepen on all sides. The sailor had mentioned his pals—could it be they who had offered the "oath or death" of which the scratched inscription spoke? Who was it that had "hung back"—perhaps in pity; what could it be from which the dead Sir Christopher had shrunk with the protest, "I will never be so vile"?

Felix Dering's brain reeled before the problem presented to it. He locked the strip of Malacca away, took his hat and went out, bent upon seeing Inspector Brasher. It might be wise, he reflected, to take that astute person into his confidence. At least he could be advised to place a watch on Foley.

As he crossed the terrace, bright with its trailing blooms and August sun, Felix became aware of a dark figure, which clad in the pathetic garments of a new-made widow, sat despondently on the stone bench, where, a few days earlier, she had played with her little son.

Seeing Felix, she recoiled; the unconscious gesture wounded deeply her young kinsman. Driven to speech, he sank into a seat by her.

"Aunt," he said—the formal address was the only one he could use—"will you not let me talk to you sometimes. Dering House is desolate to both of us. You—you do not believe the slanderous gossip of the village? Must I swear



"You low bully, where were you that night? Can you prove your innocence?"

Tell your best friends about our new series.

Digitized by Google

to you also my innocence of my uncle's death and Brian's disappearance?"

Lady Dering bowed her head. "I believe nothing," she faltered; "my heart is broken. Yet my wretchedness is your profit, I cannot forget that."

Her nephew clasped a white weak hand in his brown palm. "Make no mistake," he said, "until the fate of Brian and the real story of Sir Christopher's murder are cleared up and my honour vindicated, I will not accept a sovereign out of the estate, not even my salary as steward. I will never ask for Brian's death to be presumed, nor will I ever use the title unless I can prove myself free from any responsibility for his abduction. Would I sacrifice my ends thus if I had planned to bring myself into the succession by violence? Be just to me—I do not wish for mercy."

Lady Dering groaned.

"I can't understand," she murmured; "who else could have done it? You are either the most ill-starred of men, Felix, or you are—what people say you are."

She rose and glided along the terrace; soon, a bend in it screened her from observation.

Felix hid his face—the blow inflicted on him by her sorrowful utterance had been bitter. He was indeed ill-starred, for he knew himself guiltless.

Perplexed and miserable, he left the terrace and hurried down the avenue that led to the lodge-gates. He had resolved, without delay, to seek Inspector Brasher's counsel and assistance. But as he strode out between the tall iron leaves he encountered the grey locks, velvet coat, and unsteady progression of Caleb Forrester.

The old chemist started from his reverie to intercept the rapid course of Felix Dering.

"A moment, sir," he said. Felix noticed the thickness of his voice, and the spirituous odour of his breath. "One moment, I was about to pre—to presume so far as to wait upon you personally."

Felix sighed.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Forrester," he asked, and wondered if, after all, there was a basis for Brasher's grim allusion to the old man's folly in permitting his lips to be unlocked by liquor—Caleb's anxious, hunted aspect did suggest the bearer of a mental load.

The chemist gripped at the speaker's wrist.

Caleb quivered from crown to toe and his tongue boggled over it's syllables; he was intoxicated to some little extent.

"You did me a good turn once, Mr. Dering," he stammered, "and I want to say you can trust me—when I'm moderately sober. But hadn't you better get away while there's time. Brasher's dogged me around for days and I may—I may have dropped a hint in my cups. I am a curse to myself and Connie, Mr. Dering, but I wouldn't like to think I betrayed you. Why did you ever do it, sir; why did you?"

Felix shook off the nerveless grip. "You are delirious, Forrester," he said; "I have no secrets for you to keep."

Caleb nodded pertinaciously.

"Yes, you have, sir," retorted the chemist; "I saw you at the cross roads that night—when I was coming from the Wheatsheaf—late. But you can trust me not to blab, sir, on purpose, I mean."

The listener staggered. How many others, then, knew the dangerous fact he had endeavoured to suppress? Twice in an hour, it had been stated to him and by mouths he dared not hope could preserve it from repetition.

"Do as you choose, Forrester," he said sternly; "yet do not imagine I admit the ridiculous imputation you have directed against me. I regret, however, you should entertain such an idea of an innocent man."

The chemist blew his nose with a large red bandanna.

"Innocent or guilty, sir," he muttered, "you were kind to me and I'll not split if I can but stay half sober. But get out of England while you can, Mr. Dering; it's madness to remain. Others may have seen you that night; put the sea between Wyresdale and you, sir, while you may."

He stepped aside.

The patter of ponies' hoofs neared them down the lane.

Felix looked up—it was Judith Garland, in Lady Dering's basket-phæton.

The parcels on the front seat showed that she had been to the High Street.

Opposite Felix she halted and motioned him to enter. He did so, automatically, it seemed to him, as if he alone had no control over his will or his destiny. The ponies pattered on towards the avenue, leaving Caleb Forrester on the earthen kerb.

Judith studied the handsome features of her companion. Then she said:

"You know that I have just returned from town."

Felix assented.

"While there," pursued Judith, lowering her tone, "I was audacious enough to make some inquiries as to the possible fate of little Brian. To my horror, Mr. Dering, I discovered, in a roundabout manner, a terrible fact. You recollect the cheque you gave me—for—for my brother? the one made out to bearer for twenty pounds?"

"Yes," answered Felix, drily.

Judith whispered the rest of her information, her full red lips almost touching his cheeks and her black eyes lit by an odd excitement.

"The person who took away Brian," she said, "carried that cheque with him."

(To be continued.)

The Mistakes We Make.

Cloth, with Index, price 1s. 6d., postage 3d. extra.

Some of the numberless subjects dwelt upon in this instructive book are: Cleopatra never erected her needle—Westminster Abbey is not an "Abbey"—Æsop never wrote the fables—Who wrote the "Apostles' Creed"?—Don't call an Australian black a "native"—"Lord" Bacon was not a Lord—A German invented the guillotine—Dresden china not made in Dresden—But little ice in Iceland—Mistakes about mountains—Sugar for beetroot—Why trees split—The bloodhound—Cats' eyes don't shine in the dark—Birds never die of cold—Seals are not flayed alive—How a bull charges—Mistakes about moths—Locusts are good to eat—Sharks not so bad—The sloth not slothful—Birds with wrong names—Hot weather doesn't cause rabies—Quotations that one misquotes—Words that some great men never spoke—Some common errors in speech—Mistakes in plurals—Spelling mistakes—Wrong pronunciations—Apologies that are not apologies—The origin of foolscap—Glass Slipper—The Iron Duke—Where Shelley was drowned—Deceptions about Dickens—Colouring pipes is a very old idea—Venus was not a well-formed woman—When death is most busy—There is no nourishment in beef-tea—The English are not an Anglo-Saxon people—Rufus was not shot by an arrow—Dick Whittington had no cat.

ORDER FORM. **S.S.**

TO THE PUBLISHER, 17 HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.

Please send me a copy of "The Mistakes we Make," for which I inclose One Shilling and Ninepence in stamps.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Beautiful Hazel Harlow will interest you deeply.

Digitized by Google

This Story has just began.

You should get a copy of *P. W.* to-day.

Oblige the Editor by passing "Short Stories" on to somebody else.

Short Stories That . . . . . Make You Laugh.

We devote every week space in *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a Stereoscope to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case, the source MUST be stated. Attempts must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, August 12th. Postcards only, please. The first prize of One Guinea has been awarded this week to Mr. J. G. Bennett, 8 Sidney Street, Grantham, whose contribution is denoted by a star thus.*

THE mother of a little three-year-old girl had been away from home over night, and on her return asked: "And how did my little girl get to sleep last night without mamma?" "Oh," she replied, "papa twied to sing to me like 'ou does, an' I des went to sleep weal twick, so I touldn't hear him."

*THE best puns are unintentional. Thus, the well-known Californian tomato-grower, Mr. Perry, was walking about his garden in company with his brother from the city. "You raise an enormous lot of tomatoes, John," said the city dweller. "What in the world do you do with them?" "Well," said Mr. Perry, "we eat what we can, and we can what we can't."

A FEW years ago in Parliament a London member sat down, after his maiden speech, on a new silk hat which he had provided in honour of the auspicious occasion, and as he was ruefully surveying his battered head-gear, to the amusement of the unfeeling spectators, an Irish representative rose, and gravely said: "Mr. Speaker, permit me to congratulate the honourable member on the happy circumstance that when he sat on his hat his head was not in it." The call of "Order! order!" from the Speaker was drowned in roars of laughter.

A MAN who worked in a mill near Burnley went out of his mind, and was removed to the asylum. A fellow-worker, on passing the asylum one day, saw Jimmy sitting in the grounds, smoking his pipe. "Hallo, Jimmy," he called out, "how are you goin' on?" "Oh! Aw'm going on first rate, thank yo'," answered Jimmy. "Ah'm varry glad to hear it, lad. Yo'll happen be cumming back to wark soon, eh?" "Wot!" exclaimed Jimmy, in great surprise, "leave a big house and a grand garden like this, and cum back to wark! Do yo' think Aw'm wrang in my head?"

AN old couple living in Gloucester
Had a beautiful girl, but they loucester;
She fell from a yacht,
And never the spacht
Could be found where the cold waves had toucester.

An old lady living in Worcester
Had a gift of a handsome young rorcester,
But the way that it crough,
As 'twould never get through,
Was more than the lady was uorcester.

At the bar in the old inn at Leicester,
Was a beautiful barmaid named Heicester,
She gave to each guest
Only what was the buest
And they all, with one accord, bleicester.

"WHAT is the meaning of the word 'luke-warm'?" asked the teacher. "Johnny Cumso, you may answer." "Water is luke-warm when it looks warm and isn't."

"GAZE upon the pure, beautiful evening star, and swear to be true while its light shall shine! Swear, my love! Swear by Venus!" exclaimed a youth in impassioned accents. "How stupid you are!" answered the Girton girl. "That is not Venus. The right ascension of Venus this month is 15hrs. 9 mins.; her declination is 17 deg. 25 mins. south, and her diameter is 10.2."

FIRST DETECTIVE: "I've got the two men who committed the murder. Their names are Muggs and Juggs." Second detective: "You don't say so! How did you discover them?" "I ran across Muggs one day and boldly charged him with the crime." "How did he take it?" "He changed colour—a sure sign that he is guilty." "True, and the other?" "I saw Juggs soon after and boldly charged him with the crime." "Good! How did he act?" "He did not change colour at all—a sure sign that he is a hardened criminal."

A STORY is told concerning a wee girl of five years who had so large a number of dolls that she became a fair judge of the necessary requisites of a good doll. One day a baby came to the house. When it was put into her arms, this real live baby, the five-year-old surveyed it with a critical eye. "Isn't that a nice baby?" cried the nurse, with the joyous pride with which a nurse always regards a new baby, in which she feels that she has a proprietary interest. "Yes," replied the little girl hesitatingly, "it's nice, but its head's loose."

DURING a lesson in a medical college the other day one of the students, who was by no means a dullard, was asked by the professor: "How much is a dose of ——?" (giving the technical name of a strong poison). "A teaspoonful," was the ready reply. The professor made no comment, but the student, a quarter of an hour later realised that he had made a mistake, and straightway said: "Professor, I want to change my answer to that question." "It's too late, sir," responded the professor, curtly, looking at his watch, "your patient has been dead fourteen minutes."

IN a sham fight which was held in connection with a a volunteer camp lately, the invading force was led by an officer whose hand was better suited to the plough than to the sword. They were marching down a road, and, on turning a sharp corner, they came across the enemy, lying but a short distance from them. "Charge!" commanded the officer. Away went his men at full speed, and when they had covered about half the distance to the enemy they heard their officer shout—"Come back, come back, the hale pack o' ye; come back to where ye started from, and start owre again. I've forgotten to order ye to fix bayonets."

A WELL-KNOWN sportsman was lately entertaining some friends previous to a drive, when he happened to mention the wonderful equanimity of a certain servant of his whom nothing could confuse or upset. "I bet you a fiver I do," said a wag who was present. "Done!" returned the host, "I expect him in every minute." Just then the door opened, and the individual in question entered the room; addressing his master he announced solemnly: "The carriage waits without, sir." "Without?" queried the wag, thinking he might as well win his bet right away, "without what?" "Without horses, sir!" was the solemn rejoinder, "*it's a motor!*" The wag didn't try again.

"Adventures of an Actress" begin to-day.

Digitized by Google

Mr. GEO. R. SIMS' HAIR RENEWER.

Called by him **"TATCHO."**

Romany: "GENUINE," "GOOD," "TRUE.")

And why, pray, is the successful poet, playwright, and journalist an eminent authority on hair restorer? Eager for an explanation, a *Daily Mail* representative sought out Mr. Sims. . . .

Now Mr. G. R. Sims, as many people know, is one of the busiest men in the kingdom, but hastily affixing his signature to a letter, he looked up and extended a characteristically cordial welcome. Then he said: "I will explain. I found that I was rapidly going bald. Not seriously, you understand, but the thinning out was sufficiently marked to set me thinking out a remedy. I went to two specialists, both of whom cheerfully assured me that I should be absolutely bald in two years.

"Then I discovered the preparation which is now placed upon the market. **I found that I had hit upon a remedy capable of working wonders. Look at my hair now, isn't that convincing evidence of the value of my preparation.**

"Ladies confirm my good opinion of it as a dressing for daily use. Mrs. Brown-Potter, whose beautiful hair is the admiration of the entire lady world, writes that she uses nothing but 'Tatcho.' There is nothing to prevent every woman from making her hair silken in texture and bountiful in volume, for she can obtain a bottle of 'Tatcho' now in every town or even village."

In order that the public may be able to test the superlative value of Mr. Geo. R. Sims' discovery, the Company is issuing large 4/6 size test bottles post free for **1/10**, under plain cover, one of which may be had on application. Please cut off the corner of this advertisement where marked, and send with name and address, legibly written, to the—

GEO. R. SIMS CO.,

81c GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.

Mr. GEO. R. SIMS' HAIR RENEWER

Large **4/6** Bottle Post **1/10** Free.

COUPON. S.S. .....1901.

DRUNKENNESS

CURED. This can be done with or without patient's knowledge. Send me a stamp and I will tell you how. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Mrs. C. H. (Room 8), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

JUNO CYCLES FOR LADIES & GENTS.

£10 16/8 mo.

THE VERY BEST. FREE or FIXED WHEELS The most up-to-date. Carriage Paid.

Monthly,	
£8 10s. ...	14/2
£11 11s. ...	19/3
£12	20/-
£12 12s. ...	21/-
£14 14s. ...	24/6

Write for New Season's List. **JUNO** Cycles and Accessories (over 100 pages) sent Post Free. Hatherly Hard Wood Cycle Stand, 2/6. Handlebar Basket, 10½d.

LISTS POST FREE

JUNO ...	£10	...	16/8 monthly.
Lady Safety ...	£11	...	18/4 monthly.

METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS CO. LTD., Juno Cycle School, and Works, 75, 76 Bishopsgate Street Without, E.C., and Piccadilly Circus, London, W.

KEATING'S POWDER KILLS BUGS FLEAS BEETLES MOSQUITOS

TINS: 3d. 6d. & 1/- EACH. FILLER BELLOWS: 9d.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.

Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL. Balance can be paid **5/- Monthly.** Call or write for designs and Samples of work **39/-**

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO., 184s High St., Camden Town, London, N.W.; 63 Seven Sisters Rd., N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn.

NOSE

A. LEES RAY (S.S. Dept.), **South Castle St., Liverpool,** is a Specialist on Ugly and Red Noses. Send stamp for particulars of his Patent Scientific Nose Improver. Medically-approved Red Nose Cure, 3/9. Pamphlet, "Cause and Prevention," 1/-. Machines for Prominent Ears. Blackhead Cure **1/9.**

THIS CHARMING WASHING FROCK

can be made by any lady who follows carefully the Paper Pattern and instructions.

GIVEN AWAY

with every copy of this week's

HOME NOTES

(No. 395).

The Best and Daintiest of Ladies' Weeklies. You should get a Copy at once.

ONE PENNY.

SILVER QUEEN CYCLES.

ON MONTHLY PAYMENTS Enormous Stock. New and second-hand. From **10s.** MONTHLY. Carriage paid. ILLUSTRATED PRICE LISTS POST FREE any address. SILVER QUEEN CYCLE CO. LTD., 221 Tottenham Court Road, London, W.

2/9 CHALLENGE TO THE WORLD—OUR WARRANTED TIMEKEEPER, 2/9

With a guarantee to keep correct time for three years, will be sent to any address on receipt of P.O. or stamps value 2/9, and three stamps extra for postage. To every purchaser during this month we give with it ABSOLUTELY FREE a strong Mexican SILVER CHAIN. All we ask of you is to show them to your friends, as by doing so you advertise our business.

GENEVA WATCH IMPORTERS 148 Old Street, London, E.C. (Please mention paper.)

ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.,** Sole Proprietors, **66 Finsbury Pavement, London.**

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 28lb., and I am cured." Mrs. Darnley-Smith, of Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, says: "Tablets have reduced me very much." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

Digitized by Google

THE EDITOR'S PAGE.

Beautiful Hazel Harlow's adventures begin this week. You must on no account miss reading them. Under the general title of "Adventures of an Actress," all Hazel Harlow's trials and temptations will be recounted. A novel element in these stories will be the fact that the theatrical company which Miss Harlow joins will tour through the principal towns in the kingdom. Sheffield, Newcastle, Scarborough, and Rugby are among some of the first places she will visit. Readers living in these and other places will therefore be peculiarly interested. You should acquaint your friends with these particulars.

❦❦❦

Love, Courtship and Marriage.

(Replies to Correspondents.)

"Town Mouse" was engaged to a man for three months, when one night, at a theatre, in removing her hat, she accidentally lifted off her toupée as well. He immediately got up and left her, and since that night she has only seen him once, and then he would not look at or speak to her. She is very unhappy, and asks what she can do to get him back.

Take my advice, "Town Mouse," and do nothing. He could not really be fond of you, or his love would have stood firm under such an ordeal. The wearing of false hair is a thing most men dislike, and, really, girls look far prettier with their own nicely curled.

"Sister Emmie" writes a sad letter. She has been nursing for ten years, and one day, in the fret and worry of hospital life, she rashly married one of the students on her afternoon off. Now they never see each other, as she has been moved to another block in the building, and she dares not go out with him on her day off, as it is against the rules. He has nothing in the world but what he is given by his married sister. She asks me whether I advise her to go and tell the matron all about it, or leave the hospital.

I am very sorry for you, "Sister," but should not advise you to do anything in a hurry. Why not go and see the matron, and ask her to get you a post in another hospital; give any excuse you think best, short of telling her how matters really stand. Write and tell your husband when all is settled, and you will at least be able to see him occasionally. It would be unwise to give up your hospital connection, as you will have to work until he sets up a practice and can offer you a good home.

Yes, "Jeanne," I am really pleased to have the opportunity of giving you the benefit of experience and of advising you. I know that it is a great comfort for a motherless girl to have a friend in whom she can confide. You say that you have been engaged to a worthy young man for five years, during the whole of which time you have waited for him to get into a better position, and he has worked hard to do so, because you think that his earnings are too small for matrimonial purposes. You believe he will make an excellent husband, and that in time he will rise to a much better position; but he thinks that you are spoiling your chances by waiting, and is willing to release you for your own sake. You are willing to wait for him, but wish to know whether it is wise, and maidenly, to go on.

Yes, "Jeanne," it is. A man of such qualities—a man who will work as hard as he is doing to raise himself in the social scale—is one among many; you will do well to wait, and your love will help him in his struggle. He is bound to succeed, and you are still young. I prophecy that I shall hear from you again soon, with quite a different tale. Show him this, and he will know that I bid you both "cheer up."

"Crazy Jane" has loved a sailor for a long time; he loves her, too, and has asked her to marry him, but she does not feel that she ought to become engaged to anyone, as she had an aunt who died mad. He has now asked her for the last time to be his wife, and she writes to know whether I think she would be doing wrong in accepting him.

Certainly not, "Jane," I think you are worrying yourself needlessly; many and many a happy married couple have some relation or other who has died insane. You say you love him dearly, so there can be no reason against your taking him "for better, for worse."

"Mollie" met a man last year at the seaside. He told her he was rich, and asked her to write to him. She did so, and they have kept up a correspondence until a month ago, when, instead of his weekly letter, she received a sheet of paper with a coffin, skull, and cross-bones upon it, and underneath the words written R.I.P. She thinks someone must be playing her a practical joke, and asks my advice as to what she is to do. She is doubly anxious, because she gave him her gold watch and chain to wear, and has lent him sums of money from time to time.

I should say that you have been taken in, "Mollie," and are very well quit of a rogue. It is a very dangerous practice for girls to scrape up friendship with casual seaside acquaintances.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

I am open to consider original stories of any length from 1,500 to 6,000 words. The character of stories required may be best ascertained by a careful reading of the contents of the paper. All MSS. are dealt with promptly, and every effort is made to return rejected stories which are accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes. At the same time, I cannot hold myself responsible for MSS. accidentally lost. Communications of this kind should be addressed The Editor, *Short Stories*, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, Strand, W.C.

SHORT STORIES ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0 10 0
Double " " "	1 0 0
Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion	10 0 0
Half-page " " "	5 0 0
Quarter-page " "	2 10 0
Eighth-page " "	1 5 0

All spaces above one-eighth of a page are charged at per page rate.

Series discount: 5 per cent. for 13, 10 per cent. for 26, 15 per cent. for 52 insertions.

Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, August 13th, if intended for the issue on sale August 27th, and dated August 31st. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Printed by Horace Cox, Bream's Buildings, London, E.C., and published by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

SHERLOCK HOLMES!

"The Hound of the Baskervilles," *Another Adventure of Sherlock Holmes.*

By

A. CONAN DOYLE.

This adventure of the great detective, whose reappearance has so long been hoped for, will be found equal, if not superior, in vivid and thrilling interest, to the best of those which first made his name celebrated all over the world.

THE

STRAND MAGAZINE,

AUGUST, 1901.

Digitized by Google

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

EVERY LADY IS AMBITIOUS

to possess A GOOD WATCH, and every Lady engaged in business should have a RELIABLE WATCH—like the one that

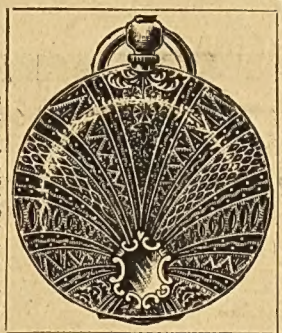
MASTERS LTD., RYE

offer to send to YOU Post Free on approval on receipt of only **2/6**

—:o:—

THE PRETTIEST AND BEST.

30/- Lady's Watch in the world. Fitted with a fine horizontal movement every part being interchangeable Patent winding work, &c., ornamental or plain dial (as preferred) Solid Silver engraved cases (*as illustration*)



WHEN you receive the Watch (if you approve of it) send us 2/6 more, and then pay us 5/- each month for 5 months, making 30/- in all.

BUT should you prefer to buy one of these 30/- Watches for cash—send 27/- only—the nett. cash price.

Your cash refunded if watch is not approved of, and returned at once.

GENTLEMEN

30/

HAVE ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY OF PURCHASING

A GOOD WATCH

ONE THAT HAS GAINED

SIX PRIZE MEDALS

FOR

PERFECTION OF MECHANISM AND EXACT TIMEKEEPING.

MASTERS LTD., RYE

will send to any reader of "Short Stories" one of their celebrated **30/- SILVER SIX PRIZE MEDAL WATCHES** on approval on receipt of only **2/6**

WHEN you receive the watch, if you approve of it, send them 2/6 more, and then pay them 5/- each month for 5 months, making 30/- in all.

BUT should you prefer to buy one of these 30/- Watches for cash, send 27/- only—the cash with order price.

Your cash returned if watch is not approved of and is returned at once.

THESE WATCHES are the most perfectly constructed watches ever offered to the public, being fitted with an horizontal escapement, every part being interchangeable, all wheels being made of specially prepared metal, well gilt, polished steel pinions, hardened and tempered springs, patent winding work, patent regulator to keep hair spring in position

SEND for **MASTERS' PRICE LIST** of Watches, Jewellery, &c., of the Highest Quality at 20 per cent. below London prices, POST FREE

J. N. MASTERS LTD., WATCHMAKERS, **RYE,** DEPT. 201S, **SUSSEX**

New Cycles

are not cheap at any price unless fitted with

DUNLOP TYRES

£3 3s. 0d. per pair. With Wired or Beaded Edges.

Old Cycles

so fitted sell second-hand quickly and profitably.

ASK TO SEE THIS TRADE MARK—

Guaranteed for Thirteen Months.

OF ALL CYCLE AGENTS.

Trade Mark.

The DUNLOP PNEUMATIC TYRE CO. Ltd.,

Para Mills, Aston Cross, Birmingham; and Branches.

HUGON'S

Supersedes Raw Suet, Lard, and Cooking Butter for Puddings, Cakes, Mince Meat, Pie Crust, Frying and Cooking. Made from best English Beef Suet only! Saves trouble of Chopping! One pound goes as far as two pounds of Raw Suet! Always sweet!

"ATORA"

Of All Grocers and Provision Dealers

SOLE MANUFACTURERS—

HUGON & Co. LTD, PENDLETON, MANCHESTER.

BEEF SUET

Samples sent FREE if this paper is mentioned.

Digitized by Google